DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 406 526 CE 073 733

AUTHOR	Bartholomeus, Yvonne, Ed.; And Others
TITLE	The Quest for Quality--Towards Joint European Quality Norms.
INSTITUTION	National Careers Guidance Information Centre, Leeuwarden (Netherlands).
SPONS AGENCY	Commission of the European Communities, Brussels (Belgium).
REPORT NO	ISBN-90-73754-66-6
PUB DATE	95
NOTE	121p.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - General (020) -- Opinion Papers (120)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Advisory Committees; *Career Education; *Career Guidance; Case Studies; Community Education; Cooperative Planning; Course Descriptions; Ecology; Economic Change; Education Work Relationship; Educational Change; Educational Quality; Employment Qualifications; Employment Services; Ethics; Foreign Countries; *International Cooperation; *International Educational Exchange; Position Papers; Secondary Education; Standards; Student Certification; Technical Institutes; Total Quality Management; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	Denmark; *Europe; Global Economy; High Performance Work Organizations; ISO 9000; *Quality Indicators; United Kingdom

ABSTRACT

This book contains the following papers about considerations in developing joint European quality norms for vocational guidance: "Joint Quality Norms in Guidance"; "Careers Guidance in the Information Society" (Frans Meijers); "The Changing Nature of Guidance" (J. Chamberlain); "Quality with Policy: Beyond Calimero?" (Saskia den Broeder); "Ethical Guidelines for Guidance Counsellors. Discussion Paper Draft Version" (Danish National Council for Vocational and Educational Guidance); "Ethics in Careers Guidance" (Frans Meijers); "Internationalisation: Economy and Ecology" (Peter Plant); "Deregulation and Quality" (Frans Meijers); "Quality and Careers Guidance in the UK" (Cliff Spracklen); "Quality Issues for Guidance Counsellors in Ireland: Perspective of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors" (Breeda Coyle); "Quality Management in Vocational Guidance" (Mariet Herle); "ISO [International Standards Organization] 9000 in Vocational Guidance" (Soren Borch); "Quality Improvement and Quality Assurance in Knowledge Intensive Service Organisations" (Eric Mooijman, Ronald Stevens); "Quality Management and ISO Standards in the PMS Centres for Community Education in Flanders" (Anita Faucompret); "Quality Management in a Danish Technical College" (Lisbeth Hojdal); "The Employment Office and ISO Certification" (Frank Witkamp); "Assessing Course Information Material" (Dutch National Careers Guidance Information Centre); "Complaints about Course Information Material"; "A Case Study of Course Information Material--with Transnational Comparison" (John McCarthy); "Quality Norms for Written Information in Denmark" (Ole Dibbern Andersen); "Summary of Contribution to the Enigma Expert Meeting on Quality in Information" (Anne van der Meiden); and "The Enigma [ENhancing the quality of Information and Guidance MAterial] Group." (MN)

ED 406 526

THE QUEST FOR QUALITY

- Towards Joint European Quality Norms

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Published by
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Tel. +31 (0) 58 33 47 02
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ISBN 90 73 754-66-6

Printed in Denmark

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This publication has been grant-aided by the European Commission from the Petra-programme.

Any opinions expressed herin do not necessarily reflect the views of the Commission.

The editors wish to thank Ms. Rita Veiga da Cunha from the European Commission and Mr. Xavier Farriols from the Petra Youth Bureau for their support and encouragement.

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Joint quality norms in guidance

"Why all of a sudden this insistence on quality" complained a guidance counsellor at one of the meetings organised in the framework of the ENIGMA-group. "We have always provided services of high quality, there is nothing new under the sun. If just we could be left in peace and provided with adequate funding to do our job, everything would be OK".

This is an understandable feeling, and one that is undoubtedly shared by many a harassed guidance counsellor, but it is nevertheless an erroneous one. The practice of vocational guidance is currently going through a period of intensive re-orientation caused by deep and far-reaching changes in society, and the new challenges that the service is faced with are not of a kind that can be solved by providing merely "more of the same", let alone by preserving status quo. A quantitative leap is not enough, what is needed is a qualitative leap as the only thing that will enable us to tackle the new situation guidance services are facing. It was the recognition of this fact that led the ENIGMA-group to take up the discussion of quality in guidance as an integral and important part of its remit.

This discovery is, of course, not one that the ENIGMA-group can claim to have made all by itself. The challenge to the guidance system is felt all over the Community, and the discussion about the possible responses to this is one that has been raised, with varying degrees of intensity in all Member states. The idea of this part of ENIGMA was to create a forum where these discussions could shared on a transnational basis, and - maybe - some form of joint understanding of their nature and how to respond to them could be achieved. The starting point, then, was an undertaking to try and define, from a truly transnational angle, the exact identity of these new conditions on the basis of which the guidance services of today have to operate.

This preliminary work led to the definition of three trends in guidance - trends that intermingle but are nevertheless clearly discernible from each other, and which each focus on the aspect of quality in guidance, albeit from different angles.

The quest for quality part One

The post-war labour market has changed significantly with the transition from the industrial society to the information society, and occupational choices are no longer made the way they

were in a not too distant past. To make a very long and very complex story very short and very simple: in the past, the individual chose a profession once and for all; went through the required education/training in one go, and continued to exercise this profession for the rest of his working life. The intervention of the guidance counsellor came at the crucial time when this choice was made, and helped the individual through a combination of information and guidance (e.g psychometric testing) to "get him on the right shelf". This type of intervention was suited for a stable environment where full employment was the rule rather than the exception, and job contents remained the same throughout the span of the individual's involvement with the labour market.

The situation on today's labour market is one where stability is a word of bygone days, and everything is characterised by being in a state of constant change. Take for instance the profession of a printer, which under the impact of computer-technological developments has changed beyond recognition over a very short period of time. Concrete professional skills risk being outdated almost overnight, and the individual thus faces a situation where he or she may have to change professions a number of times during their working life, and in any event will have to cope with the massive changes through a proces of continuous vocational (re-)training. Moreover, unemployment has re-entered working life as a real threat to large segments of the labour market, and workers may have to endure sustained periods of enforced inactivity. In such a climate, the guidance counsellor can no longer limit his profession to a once-only advice on the basis of classical instruments such as the psychological test. Careers guidance becomes a lifelong activity, whose task it is to help people deal with the changes that they will encounter in their working life. Furthermore, the guidance counsellor should be able to assist people with bad job prospects, helping them in a situation where they may not be able to achieve a stable position on the labour market for longer periods. In these cases, the counsellor must be able to assist the client in finding ways of meaningful expression of themselves through entrepreneurship, volunteer work and creative activities. An additional challenge is represented by the completion of the Open Market and the possibilities this gives to the individual in terms of adding a transnational element to education and training and opening up for possibilities of employment in other Member states than his own.

Responses to these challenges in terms of "more of the same" will - as previously stated - not necessarily result in improved quality. A whole new set of professional standards must be developed. It was one of the tenets of the ENIGMA-group that the current guidance material and standards of practice in Europe fall behind what the practice of counselling and guidance of today demands. In fact, most of the new theories and tools derive from Canada and the USA, and do not necessarily mesh well with the situation in European countries. One of the objectives was therefore to initiate, on a European level, a discussion of how to formulate a European response - in other words, joint European quality standards - to this.

The quest for quality part two

The concept of the welfare state is being challenged in more and more areas as the costs of maintaining it are making bigger demands on a strained economy. The economic boom of the 50s and 60s is a thing of the past, and citizens are no longer willing to accept the high taxation level that is necessary to finance the level of services introduced then. Consequently services that were previously provided by the state free of charge and as a matter of course are now under scrutiny. Could they be provided more efficiently and less costly by others (i.e private enterprise), and/or should they be self-financed, i.e paid for directly by the users, and not centrally funded? The words "downsizing" and "outsourcing" apply to the state as well as other big corporations as typical patterns of reactions in order to cut costs and increase efficiency.

This altered conditions have consequences for the guidance services as well. Whilst a general acceptance is emerging of the fact that guidance is becoming increasingly important as a necessary lubricant in today's complex and continuously changing society, the provision and contents are being questioned. In an effort to save money and increase efficiency, the guidance services - or parts of them - have in some Member states been severed from the public authorities and are now fully or partly in private hands, and the role of the state has changed from one of provision to inspection. Guidance services have found that they need to demonstrate that they can provide and maintain a uniform high level of quality throughout the orga-

nisation - otherwise they risk being put out of business altogether. Ousted by other types of organisations that can do the job cheaper and better.

Thinking in these terms is a challenge to many guidance counsellors, to whom "quality" was an implicit knowledge that could not necessarily be shared with others (like the counsellor quoted at the beginning of this introduction). They now find themselves in a situation where they have to demonstrate to the providers of funding - which is in most cases the public authorities, but also in some cases the users themselves - exactly what it is they are doing, and how they are going to guarantee that they are capable of continuing to perform at this level. This is a difficult task when quality has been an implicit knowledge rather than a set of formulated rules, and the fierce discussions that this sparks off are still raging. As one way of going about this, some services have looked at the standardised quality norms of industry - known as ISO 9000, EFQM etc. - and have tried to apply these to the guidance service, with varying rates of succes.

But whereas the task of describing quality in output in order to secure funding is basically management's headache, also the individual guidance counsellors are being made to feel the pinch. The existence of their workplace is no longer guaranteed as part of a public service, and they now find themselves to be employed in structures that need to make both ends meet in order to survive, and are consequently run on strict business lines. This poses some very poignant problems in terms of ethical lines of conduct for the individual. Take the example where guidance counsellors are employed by schools (careers teachers) that have been privatised. It is of the highest importance for the school to attract and hold as large a number of students as possible, and the guidance counsellor knows this as well as the management. How does this affect his relationship with the client? Is it possible that it may induce him - consciously or subconsciously - to try and keep a student in the school in every possible way, even though the objective interests of the client would make a change of school a better solution? The introduction of money in guidance makes the question of ethics more pertinent than ever, and a number of professional bodies have tried to draw up codes of ethics for guidance. This is, of course, very much in the interest of the client, who has a right to an objective and unbiased service - but also in the interest of the guidance counsellor himself, who may feel his professional integrety under attack from the management, whom he may feel wishes him to place financial considerations before his professional duties. This goes for the practice of guidance in the situations where counsellor and client are sitting face to face as well as the written information material that the counsellors or others produce in order to facilitate the educational or occupational choice of the client.

The quest for quality part three

The third angle of approach is very directly linked to the work of the ENIGMA-group, who is dedicated to the production of high quality guidance materials that can be used throughout the Community, especially in order to promote transnational mobility among students and workers. How is it possible for a transnational group to produce, for instance, a handbook for young people, or an interactive computer-based guidance programme without a shared conception of what quality actually is, or at least a mutual understanding of it is perceived by the partners? In this way, the discussion of quality was an integral and indeed indispensable part of the work of the whole group, and it was on an ongoing basis translated directly into operational terms to influence every activity of the group.

The aims

These being the challenges to the guidance system in the 90s - what are the proper responses to that, and how could the ENIGMA group possible contribute to this new re-orientation in a positive and constructive way?

Nobody would in their right frame of mind expect from a group of such limited resources and political influence as the ENIGMA-group to come up with a complete analysis of the situation and a full set of immediately implementable quality norms for use all over the Community. Such an undertaking is not feasible, and probably not even desirable. Therefore the title of

the book: the somewhat archaic word "quest" suggesting a unattainable almost mythical goal, but a lively and interesting search-proces.

But there lies a very big value in just bringing together experts from the various Member states to discuss these matters, as the developments sketched above have taken various forms in various Member states, and some Member states have gone further down the road than others. Since the overall challenges to the guidance services are the same, it is possible to learn from each others mistakes and successes, and build on the experiences of others instead of going the whole way oneself. Also, through a comparison of the approaches of the different Member states, new and interesting solutions suggest themselves that build on the best elements of all. The diversity, then, becomes a source of inspiration and synergy instead of a weakness.

It has been the ambition of the group to create such a forum, and at the same time to draw a line in the sand to establish exactly where we are now at European level in the discussion of these matters. In other words, realign the discussion in order to avoid overlap and countless reinventions of the wheel.

The approach

The discussion of quality in guidance covers a potentially enormous field, and it is necessary to be structured and focused in order to get some kind of handle on the subject. In order to secure progress, the group therefore decided to define some key subjects for the work and to structure the discussions round these. They were:

- a discussion of the altered role of guidance in the information society

- tracing the discussion of quality in the guidance field

- ethics in guidance

- quality norms for written information material

- industrial quality standards (ISO 9000, EFQM) and their possible application to guidance services

The first theme, which in some respects creates the setting for all the following subjects, became the focal point of the first year's discussions. In the second project year, the four following subjects were taken up. The approach has in all cases been one where the themes, once they were identified, have been discussed on national level and subsequently at a transnational expert meeting. In all, 4 such transnational meetings were held, and the time and venue for the four expert meetings were the following:

Feb. 16th 1994
Ireland (Dublin)

Feb. 10th 1995
The Netherlands (Leuwarden)

March 13th 1995
Denmark (Odense)

April 10th 1995
The Netherlands (Leuwarden)

The participants were especially invited for each seminar, and even though there are several participants who appear in two or three meetings, the group basically brought in a fresh set of experts for each new theme broached. This makes the circle of participants somewhat large (see below) and to this number must be added a significantly larger body of experts who carried forward the discussions on national level and helped in the preparation of the background papers that were presented at each seminar.

The book

One of the problems with the previous discussions about quality in guidance has been that they largely took place on national level and but rarely had repercussions on the European scene. One of the goals of the work of the ENIGMA group on this project being to "draw a line in the sand" and align the discussions of the individual Member states, it was a prioritised task to ensure that the outcomes of the work were made known to a large public. The decision was therefore taken to make available, in the shape of a publication, the working papers and documents of the expert meetings. And this is the result. The structure of the book is rather primitive and follows that of the work: each of the selected themes has a chapter of its own which contains some of the most important and pertinent documents that were used or produced in the discussions. Very little has been altered in or omitted from the texts, and for some of them, some background knowledge is necessary in order to see them in their proper light, and this has been supplied in a short introduction to each theme. Obviously the texts could have been made more streamlined and coherent if more time had been devoted to editing, but the resources in terms of time and finances were limited, and there is also something to be said for presenting them in their pristine and virginal form.

The only deviation from this principle concerns some lenghty footnotes in some of the articles that have been omitted for space reasons and since they were not indispensable for the meaning of the article. Full versions of these articles are available from the editors

It should be noted, however, that it not all of the documents and working papers have been included in this book. This should not in any way be taken as an indirect comment on the quality of the papers left out - rather, the omissions have been decided upon for reasons of overlap and or lack of space. For reasons of intelligibility to the lay reader, some texts have been omitted that required too much inside knowledge to decipher.

As the authors to the texts included in the book (where these are individually identifiable) in most cases have made their contribution for a very modest fee or even free of charge, it is only fair that all matters concerning copyright rest with them. Any use, in extenso or in excerpts of the articles in this publication is therefore not allowed without the prior consent of the author.

Acknowledgements

The discussion of quality in guidance has involved a large number of participants, and it is impossible to mention the names of all contributors. However, special thanks must go to the individuals who devoted their time and efforts to preparing and attending the 4 expert meetings. These are (in alphabetical order):

Seamus Barry, Mount Sion C.B.S (IRL)
Saskia den Broeder (NL)
Ed van de Beek, LDC (NL)
Lo Cohen, Dutch Association of Career Teachers (NL)
Rory Corcoran, Ministry of Education (IRL)
Breeda Coyle, Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IRL)
Peadar Crowley, Ministry of Education (IRL)
Ole Dibbern Andersen, SEL (DK)
Patrick O'Doherty, St. Mills College (IRL)
M.B.L van Hagen (NL)
Mariet Herle, HICO (NL)
Lisbeth Højdal, R.U.E (DK)
Frank Kavanagh, Ministry of Education (IRL)
I.C. Lauritzen, County of Funen (DK)
Anmari Lundegard, the National Council for Educational and Educational Guidance R.U.E (DK)
John McCarthy, Leargas (IRL)
A. Van der Meiden (NL)
Frans Meijers, University of Leiden (NL)
Lone Nordskov Nielsen, County of Funen (DK)
Peter Plant, DLH (DK)
Y.B van der Sluis (NL)
Rupert Spijkermann, AMA (NL)
Cliff Spracklen, Bradford Careers Service (UK)
Annika Thrane Sørensen, ACIU (DK)
Koos de Vos, LDC (NL)
Anthony Watts, NICEC (UK)
Gerard Wijers, IBLP (NL)
Frank Witkamp, Employment Office Alkmaar (NL)

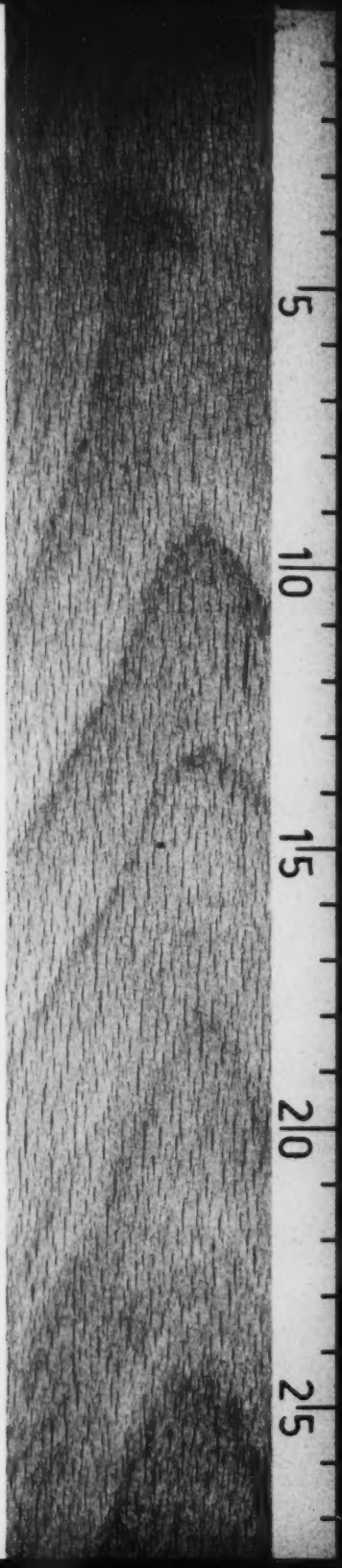
Copenhagen and Leuwarden, June 21, 1995

Yvonne Bartholomeus - Eddie Brongers - Søren Kristensen

First section:

Guidance in a changing world

The 3 articles in this first section put the spotlight on the changes in society and their effects on guidance. The first, by Frans Meijers, takes a broad perspective and looks at society in general, whereas the second, by J. Chamberlain, more narrowly focuses on the situation in the Republic of Ireland. Saskia den Broders in the third is concerned with the demands that these changes make on the guidance services, and tries to point out ways of coping with the new state of affairs.



Frans Meijers
Frans Meijers is a sociologist from the Catholic University of Nijmegen. He is the Vice Chairman of the Dutch Careers Guidance Council.The article is based on the publication: 'Het AOB in de informatiemaatschappij, een beleidsvisie' by G. Janssen, F. Meijers, R. Spijkerman en G.A. Wijers. Leeuwarden, LDC 1993.

Careers guidance in the information society

In a recent article Tony Watts made a recommendation for the establishment in the UK of a National Council on Guidance for Learning and Work to define and monitor quality standards and to provide strategic leadership for guidance in support of lifelong career development for all. In the Netherlands we already have such a National Council, and I am the vice-president of it. In this role, I have experienced that it is impossible to define quality standards and to provide strategic leadership without a clear view on the function and the functioning of careers guidance in a post-industrial society. Therefore, ninety percent of my lecture will be devoted to a sociological analysis of the changes in the allocation processes - developed in collaboration especially with Gerard Wijers who is also present here - and the impact of these changes on careers guidance as a system. Only in the last ten percent of my lecture I will make some remarks about quality and quality standards.

Developments in the field of work allocation

In today's society the individual is often confronted with complex career problems. Not only do most individuals experience getting and holding down a job but they experience it several times in their lives. Many are forced to take their career in hand several times in the course of their working life. Twenty-five years ago this type of career problem scarcely existed. The average person gradually took on a crystallised working identity. In a fashion parallel to the development of this identity such a person aimed at the ever-smaller range of choices in the occupational world which matched up with their self-concept in the process of creation (Gottfredson 1981). At the end of training the individual opted for one of the occupations available in his range of choice and subsequently, without too much conscious effort, landed in the working situation where the chosen occupation could be exercised for the rest of his life. In other words, in the recent past people reached a working position by means of institutional forces. In various social institutions they were socialised for a specific occupational area, with each institution in which the individual was present for varying lengths of time making a (clearly defined) contribution to the overall process. They provided the individual with an identity and a "life direction" and they usually ensured that the individual reached and remained at a work destination that fitted the individual's identity and direction.

In today's society the institutional forces give the individual a far less unambiguous picture of direction and identity, if only because their mutual inter-linking has been weakened. Chan-

ges in the allocation process can be summarised as follows. In earlier times the individual was an object in the process, but at present the individual is under growing pressure to develop into the subject of his own work allocation. In the past the responsibility for work allocation lay in the social context (here, with the actors in the worlds of education, job provision and business life, who did not shrink from assuming that responsibility). At present that responsibility is weighing more and more heavily on the shoulders of the individual himself. An illustration of this is a recent piece in the newspaper reporting that IBM's management had asked all the company's employees to reflect on themselves (self-assessment) and to ask themselves the question as to whether the individual employee could make an interesting offer on the internal jobs market (self-marketing). Those who were not able to give a positive answer had then to ask themselves whether it was not time for them to quit IBM.

Via learning tasks to actor qualifications

In order to be a subject in his own work allocation the individual must, we feel, learn to perform three tasks. These are (a) learn to form an identity, (b) learn to determine a direction and (c) learn to plan a career and launch yourself on it. Once the individual has learned these three lessons he or she has become an actor: someone who has a hold on his or her own career.

Learning to form one's own identity

In the first post-war decades, formation of identity was relatively unconscious-precisely because the socialising effect of the various institutions was so strong (because no-one was calling them into question). Since the social context was still coherent, the individual was able to see himself as a single undivided personality. But because the cultural context of present society is pluriform, the socialising forces are no longer unambiguous and the opportunities of living out one's selfhood so diverse, the individual no longer easily learns to know himself as a coherent, crystallised personality, but perceives himself much more as a collection of sub-identities (Luken 1990), as a "a short polyphonic novel" (Hermans 1993).

The individual is, in consequence, constantly facing the challenge not only of continually examining self-knowledge with a critical eye but also - and at the same time - of organising the various parts of his own personality to constitute a functioning whole. This partly requires a rational approach: the various parts of the concept of self must be continually tested against experience and for logical consistency (Taborsky 1992). However there is also a partial need of a more literary approach. The various parts of the personality must be organised in a sensitively satisfying and sensible manner into a whole which fits into the individual's own life story. And again, it is not just a one-off exercise but a constant requirement. New experiences and old, memories that flood back - these all require attention and processing into a concept of self, a life story and a role which the individual wishes to play.

Learning to determine one's own direction

To be able to form one's own identity is a condition for working on the second learning task: learning to determine one's own direction. In earlier times a sense of direction emerged in the course of the socialisation process. This gave the individual a sense of orientation in that part of the world of work corresponding to his own identity by the time the choice of an occupation had to be made (Gottfredson 1981, Wijers 1987). When the occupational structures became more vague and the relationship between occupations and opportunities for work in work organisations weakened, it became extremely difficult to gain, via images of occupations, a picture of work opportunities appropriate to the individual's personality. In addition the lengthening youth phase had given learning a significance in itself: learning is less and less directly related to the world of work, a world which had become largely opaque (Meijers et al. 1993). What is more, deciding a direction for oneself became more difficult because the individual was required to choose more and more from a multiple array of options: much more so than in the past he has to attend to the problem of balance between work, family and free time (Super 1990). Finally determining one's direction is hampered by the lack of unity in the concept of self. The various partial identities often indicate a variety of occupational opportunities. How, then, can the individual arrive at a realistic sense of direction? In earlier times the occupations formed a relatively stable structure. But now that changes in the world of work are succeeding one another at an ever-increasing rate and are affecting the deeper structures of work, the occupations are no longer immune. Occupations can no longer function as direc-

tion-finders in the world of work , goals toward which the individual can make his way. The occupation is undergoing the same fate as the church tower: both have lost their significance as landmarks. Not even the labour market itself can work as an indicator of direction. The qualifications required by the labour market do, in fact, change as rapidly as the functions from which they are derived.

As far as we can see there is but one aspect of the world of work that has remained reasonably stable (and can thus offer some direction): the collection of domains at which the processes of production and distribution are aimed. By domain we mean a collective area of needs vital to society, such as food, clothing, housing and health. The concrete production and distribution processes targeted on, for instance, the food requirement change continually over time. Even the nature of the food changes. But there is no essential change in the need for food. Because of their static nature, such domains can represent an opportunity for replacing the occupations as landmarks in the world of work. In a phased process of orientation, consisting of a series of insights into the significance of work for the vital needs of society, the various domains in which work is performed to satisfy these needs, the historical developments of the domains and the individual's own preference for one or another domain, the individual can actually perform the task he is confronted with - that of determining his own direction (Wijers, Luken & Van der Bom 1991; Wijers 1993).

Learning to plan and adjust one's own career

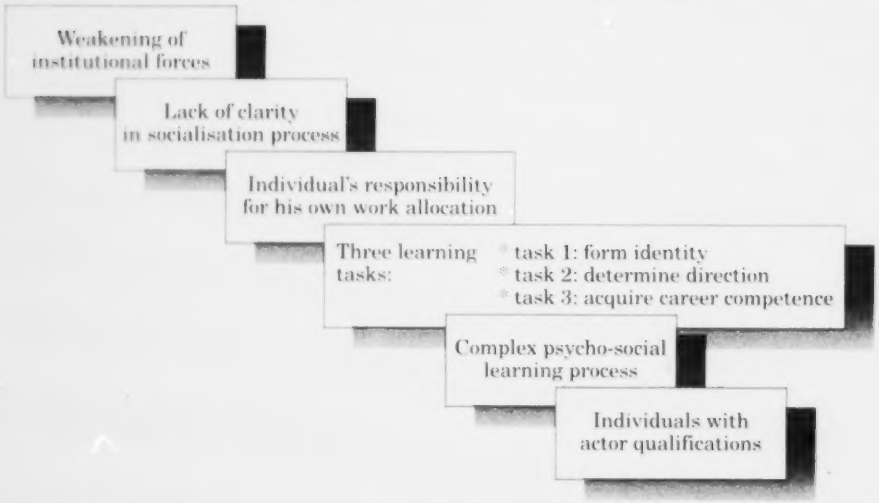
The responsibility placed on the individual for his own work allocation consists of more than the continual organisation of his own personality and deciding the direction he wishes to take in the world of work. The individual is also responsible for the negotiating skills necessary in order to gain and retain a place in work. The active competence required in order to obtain and keep a suitable form of work consists of:

- the individual's ability to use sociological an economic knowledge in order to obtain an insight into the future market demands in the domain of his choice and to begin to act on this basis;
- technical-instrumental qualifications appropriate to the future market demands in the domain of his choice, including the capacity to continue in the future to obtain through education the correct technical-instrumental qualifications;
- social-normative qualifications required for an effective entry into the labour market.

Actor qualifications

Developments in the domain of work allocation can be shown in the following diagram:

Diagram 1: The individual carries the responsibility for his own work allocation


Weakening of institutional forces
Lack of clarity in socialisation process
Individual's responsibility for his own work allocation
Three learning tasks:
task 1: form identity
task 2: determine direction
task 3: acquire career competence
Complex psycho-social learning process
Individuals with actor qualifications

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The learning result achieved by the individual who carries the responsibility for his own work allocation can, we feel, best be termed 'actor qualifications'. Actor qualifications are qualities enabling the individual to appear on the social stage as an actor, as someone who is no longer mainly passive, in the grip of the psycho-social forces exerting influence on him. He is no longer, therefore, an animal that adapts to its environment under the influence of reward and punishment, but as a person who by his actions contributes to the shaping of the world and of himself, as someone who is aware of the social construction of reality and who, in a responsible fashion, wishes and is able to participate in this historical process (Berger 1966).

An actor does not learn only like an animal, by means of conditioning and imitation, but also reflects on what he has experienced and learned. He has not only knowledge, skills and attitudes but he also reflects on these things on a metacognitive level, so that not only does he know what he knows and can do but is also aware of the shortcomings in his knowledge, skills and attitudes.

When people talk of actor qualifications the criticism is often heard that the qualifications in question are the exclusive property of an elite and lie far above the capacities of the 'ordinary man'.

But actor qualifications can, in principle, be acquired by everyone. The start is childlishly simple: all children construct identities in their play, create worlds and play various roles in them, discover preferences for particular roles and learn through play the 'skills' necessary in order to play those roles. We sometimes run the risk of forgetting how creative, flexible and adventurous (stress-proof) we were as children.

Problems in the domain of work allocation

The magnitude of the influence exerted by the shortage of actor qualifications on an institutional level can be clearly seen from an historical comparison.

Diagram 2: the social trajectory of former years

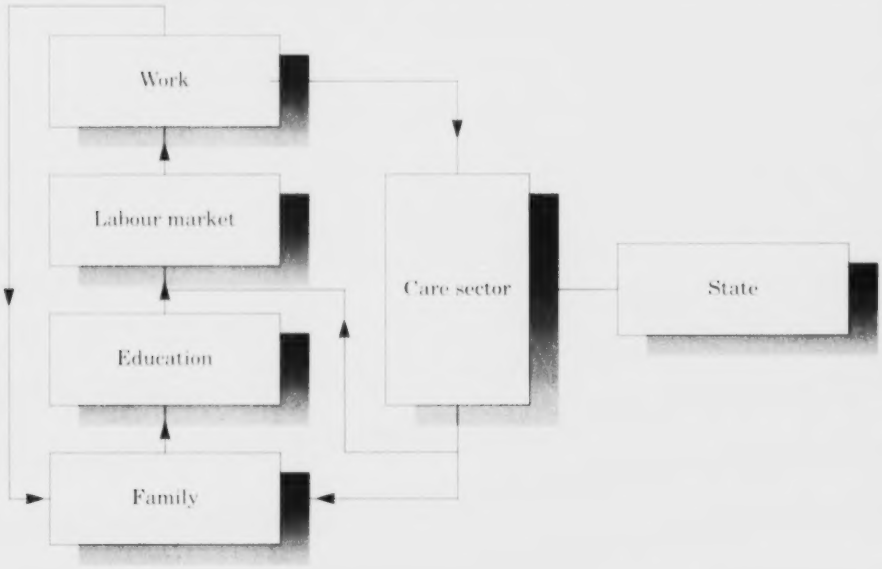
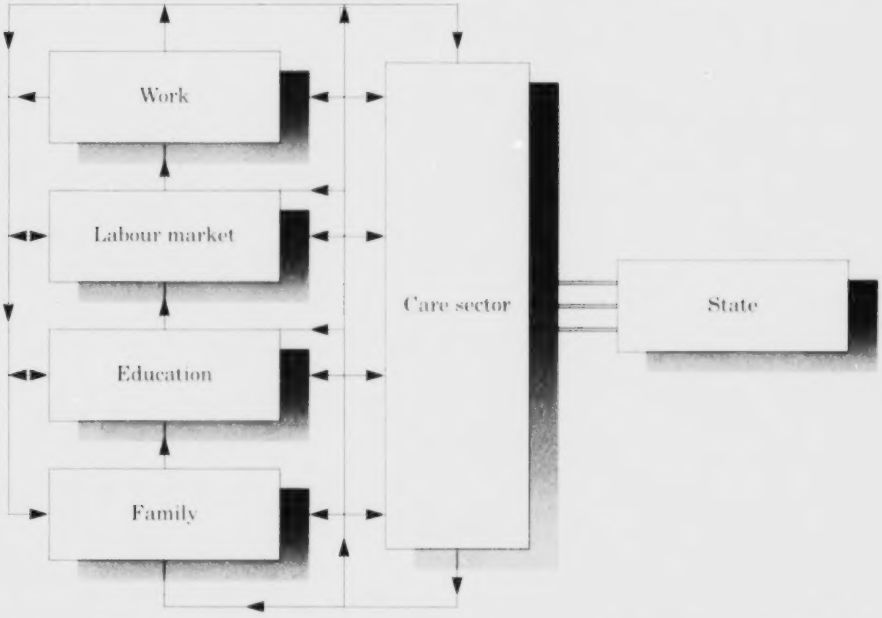


Figure 2 shows - in a greatly simplified form - the social trajectory normally followed by the individual in the former - industrial - society. The diagram shows that in the first 25 years after the Second World War the social trajectory was, for many, an unbroken line running from

parental family, via education, the labour market and work back to the individual's own family. It must be noted that the social trajectory was unbroken in a double sense. Not only the transition from one institutional context to another was fluent, but all institutional contexts were also related to each other in a meaningful way. In the family children were prepared for education, work and society in a normative way; education in its turn prepared children for the labour market or better: for a specific occupation. After a short orientation in the labour market an individual entered a specific occupation within a specific firm and the ideal was to stay in that firm until retirement forced the individual to go back to the family. The relatively small care sector and the lines joining that institution with other institutions indicates that the care sector at the time fulfilled a relatively modest social role. The same can be said of the state.

Diagram 3: the social trajectory nowadays



In figure 3 we see - again, extremely simplified - a picture of the social trajectory which frequently occurs today. In this figure we see that social development of the individual at present is far less direct than in earlier times. People fall out of an institutional framework far more frequently and then return - not infrequently via the care sector - to an institutional context that they had quit. What is noticeable is that the care sector is far larger and more frequently used. Family, education, labour market and work are at present no longer capable of keeping the individual "on the straight and narrow". And thus the passage from one context to another is no longer so obvious and there is a growing need for mutual communication and tuning.
Mutual communication and tuning not only with respect to 'technical' or 'organizational' aspects but also with respect to questions like 'what meaning has the family/ education/ the labour market/ the labour system?' and 'does meaningful relation between the family/ education/ the labour market/ the labour system still exist?'

In each of the five institutional contexts we have distinguished there are three actors who can be distinguished and who, each on a different level, are faced with allocation/ career problems of the individual as a consequence of the individual's lack of actor qualifications. First the individual himself (at the micro-level); then the organisation of which the individual is part or is dependent on (the meso-level) and - finally - the government body reponsible for the institutional context as a whole (the macro-level).

For example: in the family the husband who is on long-term sick leave and the daughter who does not know what she wants both clearly have a problem (micro-level). Many studies have shown that a situation of this sort does not leave the other members of the family unaffected (meso-level). And the individual and family problem posed by the situation exerts pressure on government and social partners via such bodies as the social services and the occupational association for the public service (macro-level).
Three actors in five contexts mean that there are fifteen actors who are confronted with the allocation/career problem as a result of the individual's shortage of actor qualifications. They have been placed in a frame work in figure 4.

Diagram 4: 15 actors who risk become overburdened by allocation/career problems

	ACTORS		
CONTEXTS	INDIVIDUAL	ORGANISATION	GOVERNMENT
Family	Family member	Family	SocialServices/ Ministry of the Interior
Education	Pupil/student	School/university, Principal, careers officer, teacher	Ministry of Education and Science
Labour Market	Job Seeker	Employment Exchange	Central Employment Board/ Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment
Work	Employee	Employer, personnel, supervisor	Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment Ministry of Economic Affairs
Care Sector	Patient/client	Hospital, psychiatric services, prison	Ministry of Health and Welfare, Ministry of Justice

The new role of career counselling

If actor qualifications are a requirement for the individual who has to plan his educational and occupational career in the information society, it is obvious that the role of the careers guidance counsellor should be involved. Contributions to the development of actor qualifications in the working-age population, designed to prevent and to resolve allocation/career problems: this is how the role of the careers guidance counsellor in the information society (Toffler, 1990) could be formally defined. The careers guidance counsellor will place the main emphasis on the determination of learning goals and the stimulation and planning of learning processes.
The work - consisting of support offered to the individual in the implementation of three learning tasks: formation of identity, determination of direction and the career planning/self-guidance - will take on a more agogic-educational character. Because of the complexity of the psycho-social learning process leading to actor qualifications the work will also be more labour-intensive.

We already distinguished five institutional contexts in which the individual can be troubled by allocation/career problems. Support in the solution of the problem means that the expert (or, as shall be more frequently the case, a team of experts) will have to take account of the factors in the context which can brake or stimulate the learning process. The context-bound nature of the individual also implies that the expert will have to give his attention to the actors at organisation and government level. At the organisation level the expert will be able to contibute to the creation of facilities in the organisation which are likely to encourage the learning process. Included in this category would be such things as advice to and training of

management in work organisations targeted at providing support in the implementation of employees' careers plans.
At government level the expert will be able to give information regarding the nature of the career/allocation problems and give advice on institutional policy likely to create conditions under which the problems could be resolved at individual and organisational level.
The role described here still has, naturally, characteristics of the old role - such things as the relationship between clarification of the concept of self/widening of horizons and identity development/determination of direction - but there are also differences. The main difference concerns probably a shift away from the old individual-centered approach in which institutionally prescribed choices were the main concern, towards an approach in which the construction of a meaningful career stands central.

What is quality?

Finally some remarks about quality. We have argued that actor qualifications become more and more important. The first criteria for quality in the field of careers guidance is, therefore, whether it enables the individual to acquire actor qualifications. This partly requires - as I already stated - a rational approach: the various parts of the concept of self must be continually tested against experience and for logical consistency (Taborsky 1992). However there is also a partial need of a more literary approach. The various parts of the personality must be organised in a sensitively satisfying and sensible manner into a whole which fits into the individual's own life story. And again, it is not just a one-off exercise but a constant requirement. New experiences and old, memories that flood back - these all require attention and processing into a concept of self, a life story and a role which the individual wishes to play.

Actor qualifications are the result of learning processes. Learning processes - in their turn - can only be realised if and when an adequate learning environment is created. Of course, the creation of a stimulating learning environment is not the responsibility of individual counsellors or the careers guidance as a system alone. The creation of learning environments that enable individuals to acquire actor qualifications are the prime responsibility of the family, the educational system, the labour system and the Labour Exchange system alike. Earlier I said that the passage from one institutional context to another is no longer obvious and that, therefore, there is a growing need for mutual communication and tuning. The careers guidance as a system can and must have a stimulation function in this mutual communication. Its contribution - and this is the second criterium for quality - lies especially in setting on the agenda the meaningfulness of specific trajectories, individuals are forced to go through. Often this will mean that the problems of schools, the labour exchange offices and employers - the three most important and influential funding agencies of careers guidance - have to be re-defined.
Using a metaphor, we can compare the old role(s) of the careers counsellor with that of a ferryman and the new role(s) with that of a pathfinder. It is to be hoped for that the adventure offered by pathfinding will compensate for the loss of security and clarity enjoyed by the ferryman.

J. Chamberlain
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The changing nature of guidance

Introduction

Many years ago Gilbert Wrenn, the distinguished American counselling psychologist, made the comment that "guidance is for life - not for a living". I think it is worth bearing this in mind as we search for criteria of excellence in our guidance practice - because it is particularly relevant today. At the present time guidance counsellors are confronted with an environment that is radically different to the one which obtained a generation ago. I would like to look at some of the economic and social factors that are shaping the changes taking place in the guidance role in Ireland.

Unemployment and the changing nature of work

First of all, in addition to the educational dimension associated with guidance, there is the objective issue of our concern itself -"careers"guidance. In simpler times careers guidance was initially job-focused; it was taken for granted that jobs were there - it was just a matter of helping the person identify and search for a suitable occupation. Now we are being faced with a situation in which the old economic "slump and boom" pattern doesn't appear to operate any more. Without wishing to be too pessimistic about it, structural unemployment seems to be here to stay. And this phenomenon is world-wide; top of the agenda of all the EU countries is the unemployment crisis. Ireland's unemployment rate is of the order of 20% and there is no sign of amelioration. Part of the guidance function now is to help people to manage unemployment.

We know, of course, from the work of Super and others that careers guidance means more than just having a job and that there is the personal, developmental, identity-fixing nature of career choice. But times change and theories change. Super's latest work on life-role saliency recognises the importance of other things we do in our lives as we move through the life span. It has been appreciated for some time that the speed with which society was changing would substantially alter our social roles. Exactly 10 years ago (1984) the IAEVG held a seminar in Dublin dealing with the topic "The Future of Work and Leisure" which tried to address some of the issues being generated by a rapidly changing society. It was very interesting then to speculate on the way society might manage the work-leisure relationship in the future. Now 10 years later we have the gift of a little hindsight. Tony Watts offered 4 possible scena-

rios then, an unemployment scenario, a leisure scenario, an employment scenario, and a work scenario. It now looks as if it is the unemployment scenario that has prevailed.

More recently, Borgen and Amundson from the University of British Columbia, in a paper delivered on the topic at the last IAEVG conference in Budapest in October 1993, spoke about the need to see unemployment with more of a psychological focus than the conventional economic one. They emphasised the feelings of apathy and low self-esteem which unemployed people experience, and identified the factors which they had isolated in their research which help or hinder the unemployed person in her attempt to cope. Their work underscores something which has been acknowledged for some time, i.e. that there is a strong correlation between unemployment and poor mental health.

Here in Ireland a recent report, "Pathways to Adulthood", published by the Economic and Social Research Council claimed, that the successful transition to adulthood has been made generally more stressful for this generation of young people because of increasing economic uncertainty and unemployment problems. The ability to find a job was identified as the most decisive single factor in determining how successfully people adapt to adulthood. Those with a "high commitment" tended to fare better than those who were fatalistic about their situations. But the report warned against trying to increase levels of "employment commitment" among young people unless there is a reasonable chance of jobs being found for them. Increased stress can result if the jobs are not there.

University College Dublin's Department of Psychology is currently involved through a number of its postgraduate students in a project dealing with the long-term unemployed for one of our county vocational education authorities. We were asked to develop a 25 week programme which would take the participants through career guidance and self-development exercises. What we found was that before long we needed to set one of the team aside to fill an exclusive one-to-one counselling role because of the number of personal difficulties which were surfacing in the groups.

It seems as though young people today must accept that work has changed. The old, vertical model, in which one entered a job and remained there until you retired with a gold watch, is a thing of the past. Now we have "job-sharing", "career-breaks", more and more people working on contract, and so on. The late Leona Tyler once made the observation that choice of career is probably the most identity-fixing choice a person ever makes in his life. One wonders what happens now when this choice eludes so many young people today. The apparent diminution in importance of one's job, and the recognition being given to our other roles suggests the likelihood of social instability.

In Ireland the problem is exacerbated by the fact that about 44% of the Irish population is below the age of 25 and unemployment is highest among this age group. Since the present economic recession there has been a sharp increase in youth emigration and it is estimated that by 1996 the overall youth population will have declined by 6.5% (Ronayne 1992). A NESC report on the Irish economy " A Strategy for Competitiveness and Employment (1993)" estimates that 25,000 people enter the labour market each year; it has led to talk of unemployment reaching 400,000 or 26% of the labour force, within the not too distant future.

Education and guidance

Irish education has been going through a period of considerable ferment. In 1992 the Government published a Green Paper "Education for a Changing World" and this was followed more recently by a Forum to which submissions were made by many individuals and institutions. A number of the issues addressed by the documents referred to key objectives such as enabling young Irish people to participate effectively in the Single Europe by preparing them for European citizenship. It recognised that this will involve making the best use of the educational and vocational resources available so that Irish citizens can enjoy the benefit of Union membership.

An interesting phenomenon which has become increasingly apparent is the way education appears to be filling the vacuum left by unemployment; many young people are staying on in postgraduates courses. In University College Dublin alone there are 1000 postgraduate students taking business courses. And the long term unemployed are increasingly turning to education courses in the absence of a job. In some instances they seek re-skilling but in others

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their interest is in self-development and the acquisition of life-skills. So in much the same way that education is ceasing to be identified with children and is now being recognised as a life-long process so too guidance is coming to be seen as something which stretches across the lifespan. Adult educators talk about "education permanente": maybe now we should be talking also about "orientation permanente". Tony Watts in his 1992 study of the occupational profiles of European voca tional counsellors drew attention to this continuous process (p 64) in his enumeration of trends.

Guidance services in Ireland are available in second-level schools, third level institutions, the national employment authority, FAS, and from private agencies. At second-level, guidance counsellors have reached a significant degree of professionalism; they are well organised and have their own association, the Institute of Guidance Counsellors. Their basic training comprises a full-time one year course and is essentially based on Super's model of vocational development. Training in counselling skills also constitutes a major part of their training programme and this is becoming more and more significant in the way they perceive their role. This personal, developmental feature of guidance is also becoming appreciated in the labour market context as well as in education.

Over the last 25 years the role of school counsellors has changed considerably. Ryan, in a report "Counselling the Adolescent in a Changing Ireland" said, with reference to the school guidance role "most guidance counsellors report that they are now meeting a changing configuration of problems no longer due to learning difficulties or indiscipline but more to do with the frustrated expectations of family life and the increasing breakdown of Irish marriages". Ryan went on to comment on a new phenomenon, that the school, which was at one time a place of insecurity in the transition from the home to the security of the job, was now coming to represent an oasis of stability between an increasingly insecure family life and the equally uncertain and uninviting market place. It is interesting to see how this mirrors so accurately Dr. Meijers's five institutional contexts which link the person and work. Another interesting feature of the Ryan study noted the tension between the careers aspect of the guidance role and the personal counselling dimension, with guidance counsellors feeling obligated to give more time to personal counselling.

Technology

Another critical concern is the impact of technology. Computer literacy is the new literacy. Some people perceive it negatively and are threatened by it. Two Swedish counsellors from the University of Lund, Henrysson and Idman (1989), who conducted a study of "Counsellors Opinions of Counselling" reported some concern among counsellors about the increasing role of computers and a feeling for "the need to counteract the bureaucracy arising from computerisation with quality counselling". However, most of us, I imagine, see technology as a powerful instrument for positive future change. From the guidance point of view it is an essential tool and facilitates quick and easy access to information; it also offers a mechanism for quick communication.

"Computer-assisted guidance" is indispensable and must become a subject in the training curriculum, without us, needless to say, losing sight of the importance of the human, mediating role of the guidance counsellor. A significant boost to the development of Irish computerised careers programmes took place in 1987 when the Irish Ministry of Education established the National Information Technology Centre to foster the use of new technologies in the curriculum of Irish schools. NITEC links guidance professionals in Ireland and Europe who are actively engaged in promoting information technolo„y in schools. It makes information available through its printed NITEC News, and through its electronic mail and database service. It currently has over 3000 users in 200 schools throughout the country and is growing rapidly.

Ireland and the European Dimension

The development of the European Union has had a profound impact on social life in Ireland; from the guidance point of view it has made it imperative for guidance counsellors to familiarise themselves with the European dimension. The European Social Charter (1986) tells us that "everyone has an equal right to appropriate facilities for vocational guidance with a view to helping him choose an occupation suited to his personal aptitudes and interests" (part 1, para.9). This makes guidance not only advisable but obligatory and under-scores the importance now being given to guidance in Europe.

Much has been done to promote trans-national guidance within the European Union but more needs to be done. Watts et al on the basis of their 1988 study of guidance services in the EC have drawn attention to the fragmentation and discontinuity within the guidance services of most Member States. Plant, in a UNESCO report in 1988 made the point that co-operation begins at home.

The 1992 Watts study has summarised very succinctly the various guidance practices which are found in the Member States and the common trends which may form a basis for the closer harmony of guidance policies within the European Union. From the Irish perspective it is very clear that the arrival of the Single Market means that the training of guidance counsellors must now include at least 4 core elements: (i) helping them to be familiar with the key EU institutions and the variety of EU initiatives like ERASMUS, PETRA, LINGUA and so on that are at the service of people, (ii) helping them to comprehend and access information which facilitates educational mobility; (iii) helping them to be informed and able to access information about vocational and occupational possibilities within the Union, and (iv) helping them to learn about guidance practices in other EU countries.

The Youth Exchange Bureau which was established by our Department of Education in 1986 has done much to accelerate the Europeanisation of our young people. It administers PETRA, and the WIDER HORIZONS Programme and runs YOUTH FOR EUROPE, an EU mobility programme which supports youth exchanges, study-visits, and training courses. And of course Ireland is involved in EURES and a number of FAS staff have been trained als "Euro-Advisors" under the 1992 and 1993 EURES programmes.

The new reality is that our young people are coming to see themselves increasingly as European citizens and are seeking their future more and more in EU countries. It is probably worth pointing out that Ireland has had a tradition of emigration since the middle of the 19th century so it is not a new experience for Irish people to be going abroad in search of work. As long ago as 1967 when University College Dublin introduced its Diploma in Careers Guidance, two of the students (Fahy and Moriarty) published a project which offered advice to emigrants who had to leave the country. In their preface they said "we'd rather you didn't have to go, but if go you must, then it is better that you go with information". Now of course, our high rate of unemployment again obliges our young people to search for educational and occupational opportunities abroad (Ronayne 1992). The difference now is that they are generally well-educated and self-confident.

The PETRA Training of Trainers project

This project has been an invaluable experience in helping us here in Ireland to understand the work of our colleagues in the EU and to bring our guidance practices into closer co-operation in the search for quality standards in the work we do.

One conclusion arising from the experience is the need for closer harmony between the guidance personnel in education and those in the labour market. And this is not just true of Ireland but seemed to be the experience in most of the participating countries. Many of the people involved talked about the need for closer co-operation in this regard.

One could say that generally, there is a closer cross-sectoral understanding among the respective educational institutions on the one hand, and the labour market employment and training authorities on the other, among the Member States than there is between education and labour guidance people in the individual countries. So, school counsellors throughout the EU are likely to know something about their respective roles and understand each others difficulties; likewise in the case of guidance people working for employment and training authorities. I am reminded again of what Peter Plant said about "co-operation beginning at home". This view of the need for closer co-operation was emphasised also by the Human Resources Committee of the now defunct Confederation of Irish Industries which, on the basis of a survey carried out in May 1990 called for greater co-operation between school counsellors and industry.

Of course in a sense we are talking about 2 cultures; the role of the school counsellor is allied to that of the school teacher and deals with the young person in the process of formation. There is inevitably a concern with the whole person, her school experiences, her home, her

examination successes and so on. In the labour market, on the other hand, one is dealing with the adult, or the adult in embryo. And here the problems are pragmatic and job-focused.

Another inevitable impression concerned the confusion regarding the meaning attached to guidance itself, what constitutes the role of the guidance counsellor, and what exactly is meant by the "European dimension". As Tony Watts pointed out (P.51) in his synthesis report published last year, the role of a careers teacher in Greece may have very little in common with the role of a psychologist working in a Psycho-Medico-Social Centre in Belgium. Clearly, more interaction by guidance practitioners will help to foster a shared meaning of what we are doing.

Any European guidance model we would hope to evolve in our search for quality standards should be underpinned by a philosophy. It is not intended to be excessively pedantic in saying that but merely to suggest that we need to know where we are coming from before we presume to decide where we want to go. Nor is it suggested that we should engage in an endless debate; but we should be able to agree certain fundamental principles. The particular PETRA group with which I was privileged to work gave a good deal of emphasis to the aspects of beliefs, values, and concepts in guidance. This was one of 3 tracks, the other two being the European dimension, and the shaping of a common curriculum.

Bearing in mind the increasing recognition of guidance as a "continuous" process stretching across the life-span, and the aspiration of Member States to strive for agreement on certain common training elements, it seems to me that initially trainers in education and the labour market in the respective countries might usefully agree the elements of a core training curriculum which could include such modules as: careers guidance theory and practice, education structures; labour market structures, the European dimension, computerassisted guidance, information management, and cultural patterns. It may be that a more open professional model, with more emphasis being given to neutrality, is the guidance counselling role of the future. However, in this event it is hard to see the role acquiring a strong professional identity.
The very diversity of guidance practices is daunting. It may be that, as Tony Watts suggests, we should pay less attention to the search for unanimity of practice and accept the diversity. That may be so, diversity is enriching. Certainly, the variety of national systems and practices suggests that harmonisation will take a long time. Having said that, it should not be beyond the ingenuity of guidance counsellors to identify some minimal core guidance objectives as a preliminary first step, and to establish some criteria for their evaluation with a view to eventually developing and enriching the training programme with the passage of time.

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Quality with policy: Beyond Calimero?

Introduction

This article is based on the Dutch report "Kwaliteit met beleid" [Quality with Policy] by the Raad voor Studie- en Beroepskeuze [National Advisory Council for careers guidance and information].

How come Calimero?

For this article I chose the subtitle "Beyond Calimero?". This needs an explanation. As many of you might remember, Calimero is a small black chicken from a French television program broadcast in the seventies. Sooner or later in each part of the series Calimero used to burst out about his fellow chickens (who are big and not black): "They are big and I am small, and that's not fair, oh no!"

Calimero in Dutch policy language stands for the often-found attitude of organizations and services being paid by the government for too long, which now have great difficulty to make the move to greater independency and autonomy.

Policy decisions are not always fair. However, I do not want to open the discussion whether careers guidance in the Netherlands is or is not fairly treated by the government. Of course I won't leave the national policy level out completely; I will turn to this later on. The central focus of this presentation, however, is the careers guidance field.

The point I want to stress is that one way or the other careers guidance services have to come to terms with its position in post-modern society. This has to happen soon, or otherwise careers guidance misses out on the last chance to assert its valuable and indispensible contribution to careers development. Working life and what it requires is one of the main issues in this post-modern society. Therefore one cannot say that facilitating succes in education and occupation is an activity of minor importance. In fact nobody does, but nevertheless careers guidance still finds itself somewhat in the shade of the public and political debate, which causes feelings of Them being big and Us being small, like Calimero.

Let me lead you through the steps of reasoning quickly before getting on from there to the main theme I would like to discuss: how to get beyond Calimero?

Recent changes

Careers guidance services in the Netherlands are recently influenced by major changes in governmental approach.
Until some years ago these services lived in a relatively quiet and protected area in which shortage of money was possible but no real financial troubles or threats existed. Careers teachers in schools, careers advisors in employment offices and specialized careers guidance services fullfilled their tasks relatively independent of one another and each had their own client groups.

Lately this changed as follows:

- decentralisation (as a widespread phenomenon in The Netherlands and many other Western countries nowadays) transferred the responsibility for policy implementation to regional levels, thus enhancing the autonomy of schools and (since 1991 existing) regional employment boards; careers guidance takes its form here as the so-called 'first line';
- a restructuring took place among the specialised services in careers guidance: the newly (since 1993) formed Advisory Bureaus for Education and Occupation now have to provide their services 'on demand' as a 'second line' complementary to the careers guidance activities in schools and employment offices;
- a similar restructuring led to the formation of the National Service Centre (LDC), which as a 'third line' finds its major task in providing the careers guidance field with materials and information.

Quality out of sight and back in again

These changes were meant to enhance efficiency and quality in careers guidance. The creation of a 'market' with the Advisory Bureaus as sellers and schools and employment boards as buyers was supposed to bring this about naturally.

In practice, it forced the Advisory Bureaus to change, more or less overnight, from government-paid services to market-oriented businesses. Their potential buyers, though (schools and the employment service), were hardly able to articulate their demands, let alone base them on any kind of established policy. Innovation and quality, although needed more than ever, disappeared for some time from the stage entirely.

Two years of this demand-oriented approach gradually have resulted in some progression towards a greater concern for quality.
The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science considers careers guidance in schools as a 'quality factor' and wants it to be controlled by the Inspectorate of Education.
The educational field developed notions of careers guidance as an integral part of student counselling and the educational approach as a whole.
The Advisory Bureaus together with the LDC and the NVS (the Dutch association of careers teachers) and others now work together on strategies for the future.

Let us go back now to the view the Raad voor Studie- en Beroepskeuze propagates on quality and careers guidance.

Subjects on a chain

Nowadays educational and occupational choices are not just choices but merely a process during which the individual gradually builds his or her career.
The labour market asks for continuous development and flexibility. The individual has to be a 'subject' (in the sociological sense) that acts upon its own course of life; work is usually one of the major issues within this 'life path'.
Careers guidance services should be at the disposition of this 'acting subject' whenever problems in its educational or occupational development course arise. This means that careers guidance at school, in the labour market and during the working life should have a logical connection, at least as experienced from the individual's perspective.

We might consider the individual career development as a chain. Then careers guidance comes in every time a link in this chain weakens or cracks.
We all know that this metafor of a chain does not have much resemblance to reality as yet.

As a consequence, careers guidance is still an isolated and somewhat accidental matter, notwithstanding the fact that the service being offered within specific settings is often adequate.

Fourfold quality as a joint venture

The Raad voor Studie- en Beroepskeuze postulates 4 criteria or assessment points against which careers guidance services as a whole should be measured:

1. careers guidance should stimulate a learning proces towards achieving so-called 'careers skills' which enable the individual to follow its own career path; this asks for a process-based approach contrary to merely focussing on choice moments as such;
2. careers guidance should be continuous (remember the chain metafor) and available at all stages of the educational and occupational process;
3. careers guidance should differentiate among various groups (e.g. men/women, indigineous/migrants, working/non-working people) and offer a specified approach when neccesary;
4. careers guidance should be accessible: every citizen should know about available services and be able to make use of them in terms of a.o. psychological accessibility, travelling distance and price.

To reach this quality level of service, all institutions that nowadays are involved in careers guidance should join forces. It does not suffice for individual organizations or branches to do their utmost to meet certain set-out standards, be it ISO or any other certification system or quality approach.
The Raad voor Studie- en Beroepskeuze considers quality as a joint venture: only in togetherness and complementarity the ideal of a chainlike service system kan be reached.

Quality is not only a matter of contents but also a matter of policy. Quality asks for cooperation on the one side and negotiation on the other. Just joining forces, however essential, is not enough: relations are postulated as demand-oriented and therefore requirements must be made and standards met. Only fruitful 'struggle' gives the neccessary 'vividness' to quality processes. In careers guidance, we can not yet or even ever permit ourselves to lean on static procedures and circular movements in which quality only means that what is measured as such. We must continuously challenge the definitions themselves as well.

Beyond Calimero: be a subject

What does this all mean to answer the question posed: is there a way to get beyond Calimero?

Quality can be translated to a conduct line for the careers guidance field. As I see quality as a matter of attitude in the first place it is possible for each organization or individual to begin tomorrow or even today. Quality is a process, not a fixed goal, which makes it possible to start on it from any position at the same time, and meet sometime somewhere in the middle.

What can we do? To work towards quality in my view the following 6 conducts are vital:

a) taking part in the collective discussion about the content and quality of services needed as a whole ('the chain');
b) positioning the own organisation and service within this growing frame of reference (which 'links' do I take care of; where do I connect to others?);
c) being aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the own organisation, making the most of 'unique selling points' and providing outstanding quality on those;
d) asking only highest quality from other organizations, especially those who stand in a demand-supply relation to you (or the other way round); negotiating about standards to be met;
e) wherever possible, acting bussinesslike and not making yourself (totally) dependent on subsidized money;
f) investing in quality development and innovation, not only in your own bussiness, but also in careers guidance as a whole (joint ventures with others, including regional and national government).

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In the Netherlands this means coming out from under the protection of government financing as a life insurance, and stop playing Calimero. There is a world to win. Careers guidance itself also has to learn to act upon the world and be 'subject' of its own future.

Quality: not without policy

In this last part I want to turn back to the part I consciously left aside before: the role of government and national politics.

The previous parts might easily give the impression governmental responsibility on the national level is not needed anymore. The solutions I pointed out seem almost too easy: just not playing Calimero anymore and acting upon one's own future lead us to a better world, where demand-oriented behaviour, cooperation and competition bring about quality in careers service.

Government and careers guidance meet again where the previously mentioned 4 assessment points for careers guidance services are at stake: a process-based approach, continuity, differentiation and accessibitity.
These criteria are not only a matter for the service field to realize. There is also a political side to them: here careers guidance comes in as an instrument for matching supply and demand on the labour market and for improving educational efficiency. Not all individuals are at all times able to be successfully 'acting subjects'. Where the individual career path stagnates often problems like early school leave, unemployment or illness play their part.

Government bears a responsibilty for providing adequate careers services to those who need them most. Availibility and accessibility are the most important quality aspects to careers guidance seen from the national political perspective.

The final control therefore remains on the level of national policy and politics, even in times of decentralisation and deregulation. How it has to be done is more or less left to those who in fact have to bring about the service; that it has to be done is in the hands of the government.
In the Dutch situation this means that the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the National Employment Board can't permit themselves to refrain from participating in the quality debate totally. It is even very important with respect to their own objectives to stimulate this debate and facilitate the careers guidance field to grow from governmental protection towards more mature relationships. Contracts and 'public-private partnerships' between government and the careers guidance field on basic provisions could be the answer to really getting beyond Calimero and setting out for a collective interest. Investments in quality should be part of this joint venture.

Final words

The best way to improve your relationship with someone is: act as if you are treated right. This is the only way out of 'double bind' situations that often exist between once-powerfull people or institutions and former underdogs.

We have dwelt on Calimero long enough to leave him behind now. Although seemingly the 'lesser' partner, careers guidance not only can be a subject that acts upon its own future, but also could turn out to be its own 'change agent' to alter and improve its relationships with the national policy level.

Let's just start behaving as if this were true!

Second section:

Ethics in guidance

With the intrusion of the market economy in the sphere of guidance, the theme of etchics has made its appearance as a hot issue of discussion amongst counsellors. But what exactly is the relationship between ethics and quality? This is at times difficult to ascertain, as the two terms are used in almost identical ways, and they seem in many contexts to be mutually interchangeable: good quality guidance = ethically correct guidance.

At one of the seminars, an 19th century Balinesian kris (a traditional knife from South East Asia) was produced to illustrate the point. The knife was of exquisite workmanship, and the blade beautifully wrought in a flame-shape, but attention was drawn to a place some two thirds up the blade, where a small piece of it was perceptively thinner. If the knife was thrust into the body af an enemy, it was explained, a quick twist of the wrist would serve to break off the remaining one third and lodge it deeply in the wound. With the primitive surgery available of those days, this meant certain death or disablement to the victim. A beautiful piece of high quality workmanship, it was argued, and very serviceable as an insignia of rank - but as an instrument of war, it must stand alongside the dum-dum bullet as a very unethical weapon.

In analogy with this, quality in guidance can be defined as the difference between good and bad in terms of professionalism or workmanship. Ethics, however, goes beyond this and denotes the underlying values in terms of good and evil: to what purpose - or purposes - are we using guidance? What role does it fulfill in society? Therefore, in order to have a focussed discussion of quality, it is necessary to discuss ethics first, to establish a common framework of reference. But even this is difficult.

At the instigation of R.U.E - the Danish National Council for Educational and Vocational Guidance - a debate about ethics in guidance was started in Danish guidance circles in early 1994. The aim of the council was to draw

up a set of ethical norms for guidance that would cover all guidance services. A working group under the council made a draft set of ethical guidelines, and this text was used at one of the ENIGMA expert seminars as a background paper for a discussion on ethics in guidance. This text is included here. Also included is a text by Frans Meijers of the Netherlands, which is written as a reaction to the Danish guidelines. In this text, he argues that the context in which guidance operates has changed, and that the ethical norms must needs change too. The Danish guidelines, he maintains, deal more with form than with contents. Finally, Peter Plant of the Royal Danish School of Pedagogical Studies describes some ideological features that he feels guidance ought to incorporate.

Ethical guidelines for guidance counsellors

Discussion paper draft version

The following guidelines have been elaborated by the Danish National Council for Vocational and Educational guidance (R.U.E.) Please note that it is a draft version which is still being discussed in the national context.

Background
In conjunction with society as a whole, education, training, and employment has undergone major changes over the past decades due to changes in trade conditions, labour market structures and technology, as well as the political, economic and cultural development as a whole.

The unemployment situation and the need for new qualifications are just a few of the many expressions of these changes, which influence our everyday life and make new demands on vocational and educational guidance. Simultaneously with a rising need for this guidance, the competition for students, the activation demands in the social security system and the insufficient training of counsellors have combined to make acute the need for a set of ethical guidelines which can protect the client against misuse.

The legal basis
Since the start of the 1950s, vocational and educational guidance was offered in Denmark on a nationwide basis. Through the 1960s and the 1970s the guidance structures we know today were developed. In 1981 guidance received its present legal framework in "Law no. 276 of June 10th 1981 concerning vocational and educational guidance". This states:

1. Vocational and educational guidance shall help the individual in his choice of education and career.

2. Guidance is offered in due consideration of personal background and future employment possibilities, in order for the individual to achieve a satisfying education and career position.

3. Vocational and educational guidance is offered by the public labour exchange, by schools and other educational establishments, and by other authorities and institutions.

The point of departure for guidance, therefore, is that it is being offered to individuals according to the personal background of these, and that it is being offered by various institutions and authorities. It is in other words the institution or the authority which has the ultimate

responsibility that the services offered live up to the intentions of the law. This responsibility must therefore also include the demand in the remarks to the first section, which stipulate that

" No matter where the guidance take place, it must be delivered according to the same basic principles"

Ethical guidelines must be included in these basic principles!

The underlying view of humanity
The law on vocational and educational guidance has taken as its point of departure the view of humanity that is underlying the United Nations' World Declaration of Human Rights of December 10, 1948, and the ILO convention no. 142 concerning vocational training and guidance in connection with the development of human resources, and recommendation no. 150.

The central element in this view of humanity is the basic respect of the individual and a recognition of equality and right to self determination. This presupposes that the wishes, background and needs of the client must always be the starting point for vocational and educational guidance, and that his responsibility for - and right to - making his own decisions must be accepted and respected.

The view on guidance
With a point of departure in the contents and the methods which have characterised vocational and educational guidance over the past app. 40 years and coupled with current practice, vocational and educational guidance may be viewed as a process that takes place in an interplay between information, education, practical activities and personal interviews, and which can form the basis for the choice of education and career, and the living conditions that are attached to these. Guidance thus becomes a development-oriented, pedagogical and often also social dialogue, with the counsellor and the client as active participants. The contents, the experiences and the value of the elements incorporated are transformed into knowledge, experience and awareness that in turn form the basis for the choice of the client.

Ethical guidelines
Respect
The basis of all guidance is the respect for the client and his right to self determination

Guidance must not be directive and supercilius, but shall take its point of departure in the integrity of the client and sovereignty in relation to choices and decisions.

It is the task of the guidance counsellor to ensure that there is a balance between the stimulation of the client to reflect and the respect for his interests.

It is fundamental for any guidance activity that all choices are made by the client. There must consequently in no part of the guidance process be a hidden - or openly declared - intention of reaching a certain result for the client.

Independence
Guidance must be neutral and independent

Guidance must safeguard the interests of the client, and not promote the interests of the individual institution or the interests of society.

It is of fundamental importance that only the interests of the client are considered. Therefore neutrality and independence are fundamental demands on guidance.

This means that the individual counsellor in his job function must be completely independent of other interests. By this is meant not only the interests that stem from the fact that the counsellor often is employed by a certain institution, but also societal interests in their broadest sense.

The interests of an institution or an authority in recruiting or in certain choices in the course of educational or activation processes may not in any way influence the guidance process.

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In the same way it goes that overlying political attitudes - i.e to enlarge the intake in certain areas of the educational system or the labour market - must not in any way influence the guidance process.

The demand for neutrality and independence also goes for the information material that is used in the guidance process. The aim of these must exclusively be to support the personal choice of the client.

The guidance material must not be conceived in such a way that they misuse the client's incomplete insight and experience through omissions or glorifications.

Openness
The overall framework and the conditions that underlie the guidance process should be explicitly stated. There must be openess concerning any institutional adherence.
In the cases where it is the counsellor's duty to pass on information or where he has functions that entail control and limitation vis-à-vis the client, this must be made clear.

The openness concerns every step in the guidance process, in such a way that the client has the possibility to assess the quality of the services offered here.

In guidance situations the institutional affiliation of the counsellor must therefore always be clear. If the counsellor has other functions vis-à-vis the client or a duty to pass on certain information, he must make this clear to the client. This also applies in the cases where a counsellor as an employee of an institution or authority has as his task to refer to or recruit the client for training or activation.

In connection with guidance material it must always be carefully described who the publisher is.

Confidentiality
All interviews must be confidential. In the cases where the counsellor according to current legislation is obliged to pass on information to others, he must inform the client about this, and about the nature of the information. The counsellor must only pass on information of a factual nature.

Counsellors are bound by the rules concerning professional secrecy for public servants, and it is of vital importance for the guidance process that the client can be absolutely sure that these are observed. If the counsellor needs to discuss the client with others, this must only happen with his express permission.

In a few cases, however, the counsellor according to current legislation has a duty to pass on information. This may be to a superior - e.g the director of the institution - or to other authorities like e.g the health services or the police. Whenever information is being passed on, the client must be informed about this, as well as the exact nature of the infromation disclosed.

It is important to underline that the duty to pass on information only concerns factual information. The personal assessments of the counsellor or others must never be disclosed.

Accuracy
The information to the client must at all times be correct, up-to-date and adequate.

Referral to other sources of guidance must enter as an integral part.

The demand for accuracy concerning the information that is contained in the guidance process is of course vital for the client's confidence in the guidance offered. Especially the volume, depth and the ongoing updating of knowledge. These matters demand that the individual counsellor is constantly offered relevant training.

Guidance material must span all possible aspects of relevance for the client. It must be accurate and impartial and should always be dated. If it contains advertisements for institutions, courses etc. this must be pointed out explicitly and any bias in the material exposed.

At the same time it is essential that other guidance systems are referred to, so that the client

may obtain further input for the sake of clarification and possibly choice. These must be referred to in the personal interviews and in the guidance material.

Conclusion

Vocational and educational guidance which is being carried out in accordance with the guidelines recommended here presupposes a professionalism that is characterised by a high degree of quality.

The basis for a such professionalism and quality must be brought about by guidance counsellors and guidance material as well as institutions and authorities.

* The individual counsellor must be conscious about his professional identity and acknowledge his personal responsibility for the client. Only where this is the case it is possible to offer guidance of a quality that is in accordance with the ethical guidelines.

* The National Council for Vocational and Educational Guidance (R.U.E.) and other producers of general guidance material must assure that this is both informative, impartial and accurate. Educational institutions, labour market organisations and others who produce guidance material must do so in a way that makes visible any bias it might have.

* Institutions and directors have the special responsibility to establish a framework for guidance activities that ensures that the ethical guidelines can be followed. This implies as a matter of course that there must be adequate interview facilities and materials for guidance, and that there should be sufficient time both to carry out the proper guidance activities and to plan and implement the necessary cooperation between the counsellors. However, this also means that guidance should be made visible and delimitated over against other functions, so that the client never is in doubt about where and when guidance is given.

* The authorities with whom the ultimate polit'cal and administrative responsibility for guidance rests, must further develop the basis for the professional qualifications which are a necessary condition for guidance. The strenght of this basis will more than anything else be synonymous with the development of better training facilities for counsellors. All counsellors must be assured obligatory initial as well as continuing training, so that they may at all times offer competent and ethically correct guidance services. The guidelines recommended herein aim in other words not merely to provoke a general understanding and acknowledgement of the necessity for an ethical basis for guidance. The aim has in particular been to instigate the relevant actors to take the necessary steps on a personal, institutional and political-administrative level.

Frans Meijers

Ethics in careers guidance

When I read the paper "Ethical guidelines for guidance counsellors" prepared by the Danish National Council for Educational and Vocational Guidance (R.U.E), I felt something was wrong, but it was very difficult for me to point out what the problem was. Only after commenting upon a text Anthony Watts sent me was I able to become clearer in my criticism.

But let me start first with my feelings immediately after reading he ethical guidelines of our Danish colleagues. In my opinion, these guidelines refer too much to the format and too little to the content of guidance. Because the guidelines don't make explicit what results should be pursued by guidance, or - in other words - what good quality is in terms of contents, the ethical debate inevitably concentrates on the tension between individual and societal interests. However, since Aristotle we know that the individual interest cannot be defined apart from the interests of society. Therefore, the line of reasoning in the Danish ethical guidelines stays very unclear, and cannot result - almost by definition - in a clear conclusion in terms of contents.

In a recent text, Anthony Watts distinguishes between four socio-political ideologies in guidance. These four approaches can be arranged in two dimensions, according to whether their core focus is on society or on the individual, and according to whether their concern in each case is with accepting the status quo or changing it in prescribed directions. In the first approach, the radical approach, the core focus is on society and on change, resulting in a view of guidance as an instrument for social change. In the second one, the conservative approach, the core focus is on society and status quo, resulting in a view of guidance as an instrument of social control. In the third one, the progressive approach, the focus is on the individual and on change. In this approach, guidance has to serve individual change. In the fourth, the liberal approach, the focus is on status qo and the individual. Here, the non-directive guidance stands central.

The point is that each approach produces its own ethical problems. The radical and conservative approaches tend to ignore the needs of the individual; the progressive approach tends to force individuals into change, and the liberal approach tends to ignore the hidden contraints of class, ethnicity, and gender. When we look at the Danish guidelines, we can find here too - although not explicit - these four approaches in the line of argumentation.

After distinguishing these four approaches, Watts ends his text in a very unsatisfying way by stating that good guidance has to find an "optimal balance", or an "appropriate mix" between these approaches. But what is the use of such a statement when no indication at all is given

about what is optimal or appropriate? And, perhaps more important, when it seems logically impossible to construct a "measure of appropriateness"?
It is self-evident, however, that Watts' conclusion - in the context of his reasoning - is inevitable.

I askes myself where it is that Anthony Watts brings himself into this trouble. I think it all starts with the introduction of the four approaches. These four approaches all have a common ideological framework (or: a self-evident starting point) - the self-determining individual which is the emblem of industrial society. In other words: the four approaches share a common logic that originates from the industrial society. In this logic, "choice" is the central concept. Within the boundaries of this logic, of this concept; the four approaches get their substance, their meaning. The problem is, I think, that neither Watts nor the Danish guidelines mention the ideological framework of the four approaches. The result of this is that he is unable to overcome the logic of the self-determining individual. He is forced to reason within the logic of the industrial society (the logic of Enlightenment, perhaps). And in this logic individual and society are opposed to each other. That, in turn, leads to the paradox that any coercion is - from an ethical point of view - a priori wrong, but at the same time necessary.

The question is, however, if the logic of the indusrial society is still a valid one. It can be argued that in today's post-industrial society, the central concept to circumscribe the relation between an individual and work cannot be "choice" any longer, but must be learning. The self-determining individual and "choice" are concepts that, from a radical point of view, hide the actual reproduction of inequality in a capitalist society; or that, from a less radical point of view, reflect the meritocratisation of the industrial society (i.e the industrial society offered upwards mobility for all social classes, and offered by doing so real chances for a self-determining (and determined) individual).

If learning is the central concept, more ethical dilemmas appear than the one described by Watts or by the Danish guidelines. I can't say that I have disentangled all, but my intuition tells me that in the discussion the semantical axe is not "freedom vs. coercion" but rather "meaning vs. meaninglesness" and/or "opportunities for learning vs. no opportunities". In short, not the quality of guidance must be the first concern, but the quality of the learning/working place. And quality can be defined in terms of possibilities for acquiring "actor qualifications". The quality of guidance can be described in terms of making good use of the learning opportunities a situation offers by stimulating certain learning processes with a view to "seducing the individual" (as the old pedagogues like Comenius said) to explore his environment and learn from it. But also in terms of defining a specific learning/working place as offering no or limited opportunities for developing a "labour identity" and creating a rich learning environment.

But these are merely stray thoughts that need further elaboration.

Peter Plant
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Internationalisation:

Economy and ecology

Mobility
It is the same the whole world over: internationalisation of the economy has come to stay. All economies are linked, global computer networks shift billions worth of dollars across national borders overnight, international transport systems are Just In Time, etc. In Europe, one of the purposes of the Single European Market is to increase personal mobility within the European Union (EU). Careeers guidance may facilitate such mobility. Thus, European guidance services are in the process of adapting not only to rapid changes in national labour market conditions, but also to the demands for information on education, training, and employment opportunities in other EU member-states and globally. This is not to say that everybody will become educational nomads and migrant workers, but some people, so far a minority, will become more Europeanised and indeed globalised in their outlook.

Both transnational and transfrontier guidance will require an extension of nationally based guidance practice into international guidance competencies. This may be seen as a purely technical task: to provide comprehensive, updated information on job vacancies and educational opportunities, living conditions etc. in other countries. This, for example, is the concept behind EURES (European Employment Services) which are designed to facilitate individual mobility. This paper intends to go beyond such systems and their technicalities: What is the other side of the coin?

Marginalisation
Mobility is a coin with two sides: it may improve the quality of life for the mobile, but the processes of mobility tend to leave the immobile behind in poorer conditions. Mobility and the transnational careers guidance which may act as a facilitator in the process are, primarily, for the skilled, the ones with intercultural competencies, language abilities etc. In short: a minority jet-set. The concept of mobility for all, however, envisages a broad variety of careers prospects beyond the national borders. Consequently, in Europe through the 1980s, mobility was seen as an almost entirely positive concept: an improvement of the quality of life in general. Not including in the official picture, of course, illegal immigration to low-paid, unstable, health-hazardous jobs. Now there seems to be a growing recognition that mobility tends to leave the socially and geographically immobile, including a large proportion of the unemployed, behind in poorer conditions. The negative effects of mobility can include segmentation, segregation and marginalisation. In such manpower exporting areas, the loss of dynamic individuals may add to the cultural and economic downward spiral. Moreover, mobility means that families and individuals are uprooted with the possible loss of friends, relatives, people and places they love. All for what? Often: simply to survive. More often: to improve their living conditions. Seen from the broader societal perspective: to boost the economy. To sustain economic growth.

In this picture, the role of careers guidance becomes abundantly clear: guidance is for the benefit of economic growth, the irony being that much of the growth is what has been labelled 'job-less growth'. In this capacity, one of its aims is to facilitate personal mobility, i.e. ease the movement of manpower (and students) to economic growth areas, thus serving as a societal lubricant. Guidance is part of such policies and will be saluted for its facilitating role as long as guidance keeps within such social control boundaries. As soon as guidance formulates social change goals, it is in danger to lose its broad social acceptance, and, ultimately, its funding. But this is, as I will argue below, precisely what we as professionals must do in the present situation. Bringing about change is a difficult path to follow. Some counsellors have lost their jobs in trying to do so. What direction should such changes take? Clearly, the present market-driven economies are creating huge gaps between the have-nots and the ones who have. Guidance in its lubricant role cannot fill these gaps, let alone ease the tensions of a sharply polarised socity. In order to better understand the present state of affairs, it is often a help to see present developments in a historical context. The following sections contain some reflections, using The Wave as a metaphor. A number of waves have beaten the shores of guidance: as one is building up and roaring in the surf, new waves are already on their way. At any one time more than one wave is splashing: I have identified four waves.

Waves

The First Wave, dating back from the turn of the century, was one which was preoccupied with mapping the soul by measuring its bodily expression. Psycho-physics, later known as psychometric testing and matching, were the backbone of careers guidance in those early days. The aim of guidance was selection. This wave and its testing tradition is still an important feature in careers guidance, more so in some countries than others, and especially so in the private sector and, e.g., the armed forces.

The Second Wave represented a reaction to the sometimes rather crude and mechanistic guidance methods of psychometric testing. The Second Wave put the client at the centre of guidance. It saw each individual as a potential of personal growth; the methods were client-centred guidance and counselling. One of the important aims of guidance was personal career fulfilment. This wave was highly influential, and is still at the core of much guidance practice. It was (and is) linked with the notion of the welfare state, where guidance may play a compensating role in relation to social (gender, economic, racial, etc.) inequalities.

The Third Wave is one which applies market-economy principles to many aspects of societal life, including careers guidance. In this wave, guidance either acts as a market facilitator (e.g. by helping to balance demand and supply in the labour market), and/or is a market in itself (e.g. by selling guidance services at a market price). One or both. In a situation like this, price and quality become issues of great interest. What do we get for our money, and where can we get the best quality? The usage of guidance services, in these terms, resembles that of shopping. A little testing here, a little placement there; wherever the individual finds the best bargain in the careers guidance supermarket. Or in the small, perhaps more personal, guidance shop. The 'market in guidance' concept seeks to improve the quality of guidance services by applying market principles to their delivery. The 'guidance as market-maker' concept is a means of making the labour market, and the education and training market, work more effectively by ensuring that the supply-side actors have access to market information and are able to read the signals of the market. One of the major aims of guidance in this perspective is to lubricate the education, the training, and the labour markets. Let us analyse this wave in some depth:

Back to Basics

Guidance practitioners seem to be both worried and fascinated by the market-driven concepts. They are worried about the funding of their services in a market driven economy: it is immensely difficult to prove the market value of specific guidance services and interventions. Moreover, cutbacks of public funding have often followed the introduction of market economy principles, as services are asked to provide more of their own funding by selling their services at a market price.
This may put a strain on guidance workers to maintain their established services, and, at the same time, develop new and marketable 'products'.

They are fascinated, on the other hand, because the notion of a market in guidance furthers the discussion of quality in guidance. If people are going to pay for guidance directly (e.g. through a guidance voucher or cash) rather than paying indirectly through public expendi-

ture, they will demand high quality at the lowest possible price. This moves accountability and quality issues up the agenda. What is quality in guidance? How do you recognise it? Thus, guidance practitioners are forced to make explicit what before was more implicit:

- what is careers guidance?
- what are the aims of guidance?
- who is it for?
- what happens in guidance?
- what are the immediate outcomes of guidance?
- what are the results in the long term?

We are back to basics: these are all fundamental questions.

Economy and Ecology

When one wave is about to break, and another one is building up, there is a period of some disorientation. Where are we now? What comes next? What is our influence on what comes next? It is a Janus-period: you have to look both forwards and backwards simultaneously. This, in my opinion, is where careers guidance is now. The market oriented trend is clearly visible in everyday guidance in, for example, the UK. It is interesting to note that other European countries have hesitated or rejected to introduce a market in guidance, although they all to some degree see guidance as a market facilitator, lubricating the frictions of education, training and the labour market.

The Fourth Wave, however, is already on its way. As a reaction against the often one-dimensional economic thinking behind the Third Wave and its market principles, a new wave, concerned with ethical issues, is in view. Clearly, the analysis of cost-benefit ratios falls far behind a number of important issues in terms of, e.g. care for the underpriviledged or environmental concern. Such issues are simply not on the economic agenda. As a counter-reaction, along with a number of national guidance organisations, the International Association of Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG), for example, is currently working on a draft on international Ethical Standards, which focus on important humanistic values. These are the traditional values attached to Codes of Etichs. But, as hinted above, perhaps new concepts need to be added: Green Guidance. What would this indicate?

Green Guidance

In returning to basic questions as outlined above, ethical issues are already touched upon in many countries: who are actually the clients of guidance (individual clients, employers, or society as a whole?); what is guidance in the first place (intervention, individual support, or impartial service?). And, in a wider perspective, what may come after the present economic concerns which tend to consider rather narrow aspects of the economic value of guidance? The Fourth Wave will, I believe, define guidance, and especially the ethics of guidance, in terms of ecology rather than economy. Environmental concern will be put to the forefront of many daily activities, including guidance, and guidance workers will have the difficult task of transforming this concept into daily practice - with a view to global perpectives. It does matter, now perhaps more than ever, what people do with their working lives: whether they produce lethal weapons or simple water-pumps for irrigation. The need to make such choices is globally evident: pollution, overconsumption in some areas and fundamental needs in others, the pressure on scarce water resources, overfishing, ozone holes, etc. The list is endless. Interestingly, even economic commentators now seem to be aware of the clash between economic growth and environmental concern: the Worldwatch Institute (USA), in its 1995 Report, stated that economic growth is at the point of being no longer environmentally sustainable. Guidance must become part of the solution, rather than the problem. This approach should be based on a number of principles for Green Guidance:

- Guidance should take into account and create awareness of the environmental impact of vocational choices;

- Guidance should play an active role in establishing training and education opportunities with a positive contribution in environmental terms;

- Guidance should be measured, not only by an economic yardstick, but also by ethical accounting, e.g. relating environmental goals to the actual performance in guidance activities;

* Guidance workers themselves should inspect their own practice: how Green are my guidance routines in the office/school in terms of recycling waste, cutting down on power consumption, etc?

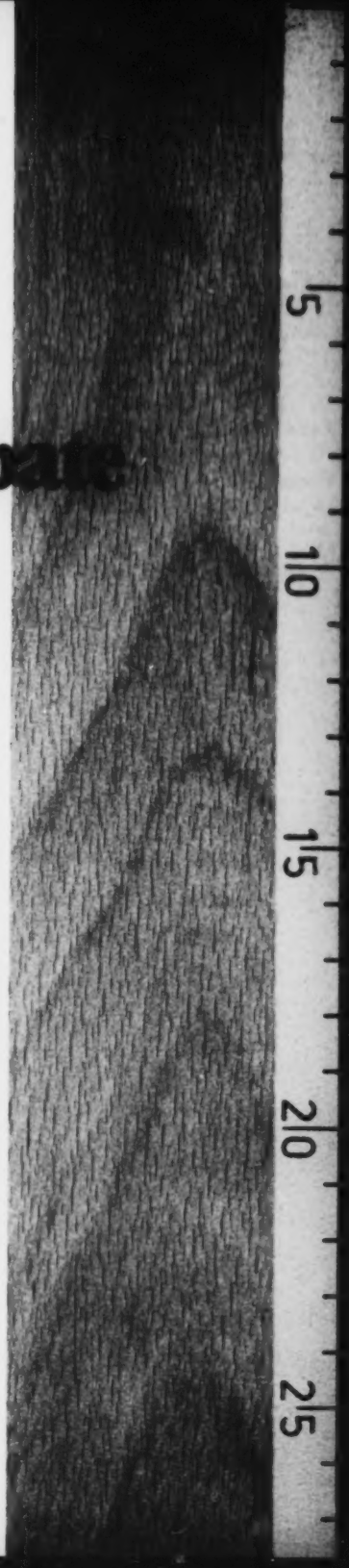
The way in which guidance workers, perhaps apprehensively, will address these concepts will differ from culture to culture. There is no escape, however, from what Giddens has labelled the 'culture of reflexivity': we must continously reflect on the consequences of our choices. Some guidance workers, no doubt, will find the outlined approach dangerously both fundamentalistic, as some commentators see new forms of fundamentalism in environmental concerns and policies, and directive: it certainly questions a more laid-back guidance practice, and perhaps even the client-centered approach itself. At its best, Green Guidance could be pro-active, questioning, probing, reflexive, and client-centered in the real sense: it still leaves the dicisions to the client, but, perhaps, on a higher note of commitment. Moreover, especially in relation to internationalisation, its puts guidance into a central position: environmental issues and concerns know no boundaries.

Third section:

Aspects of the debate on quality

"Quality" (with a slight rephrasing of a popular and age-old saying) "lies in the eye of the beholder", and it was a prioritised task of the group to try and get an insight into the way in which the debate on quality in guidance unfolded itself in various circles and in various Member states; as a necessary basis for any further discussion. This was an exercise that took place all along the two years that the group stayed together, and that had no particular expert seminar devoted to it.

The aim of the following selection of interventions and articles is to give, from the admittedly not too elevated position of the ENIGMA-group, a few of the salient features of the debate on quality in some of the Member states. Frans Meijers describes the situation in the Netherlands as far as policy is concerned and indicates the areas in which solutions should be sought for. Cliff Spracklen describes the historical development of thoughts on quality and careers guidance in the UK: from an input or process-oriented quality-view to a more output-oriented system. Breeda Coyle gives a thumbnail sketch of the Irish careers guidance service as a hybrid of the American and European model. Finally, an article by Mariet Herlé gives a personal account of the discussion of quality and especially the way in which industrial quality norms and guidance services clash. This article, incidentally, also serves as a bridge-builder for the next section.



Frans Meijers

Deregulation and quality

A new concept for government

For some time, now, the relationship between central government and the citizen has been hallmarked by deregulation and decentralisation. Increasingly, a differentiation is made between policy preparation, which is recognised as a task of central government, and policy implementation, which is considered the responsibility of regional or local government, or other executive bodies appointed for that task. To enable them to implement their tasks successfully, the executive bodies are given a high degree of autonomy (in other words, powers of decision making).
In the last few years, these developments have been supplemented by a further element, namely the attempt to permit the users of services paid for from the public purse to exercise some influence on the manner in which these services are provided.
It should also be added that amongst many of these executive bodies, there is increasingly evidence of economies of scale.

The overall expectation is that deregulation and decentralisation, in combination with economies of scale and the introduction of market principles, will lead to:

(a) an increase in the quality of the services offered;
(b) more efficient use of public funds; and as a result
(c) lower or at least better controlled expenditure.

For the careers guidance in the Netherlands, this new concept of government has resulted in a forced restructuring of the 2nd line service provision bodies (regionalisation, the establishment of Advisory Bureaus for Education and Occupation) and in a (for the time being earmarked) allocation of resources for the provision of careers guidance to schools and Regional Employment Boards.

Problems

In practice, however, this new management concept, hallmarked by a combination of "hands-off control" on the part of the government and "increased autonomy" on the part of the executive bodies, is proving difficult to implement.

The links between deregulation and cut-backs are too great. It is clear that the regionalisation programme which resulted in the establishment of the Advisory Bureaus for Education and Occupation was intended as a cut-back programme.

The pedagogical optimism expressed by the government. In parallel to the deregulation policy, at government level, there was evidence of ever growing optimism in respect of the capacity of schools to increase the quality of the education they supply.
It is clear that the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences and the Central Employment Board are being extremely optimistic, when they talk of the willingness and capacity of schools and employment offices, to introduce innovation. Implementing a systematic approach to careers guidance implies the creation of new forms of cooperation between subject teachers, and those in our schools, involved in what is today described as "student counselling". Cooperation of this type would only appear to be achievable if additional space is created in the method-based activities of the subject teachers, for dealing with career problems. The practice of Orientation and Preparation within (Short) Senior Secondary Vocational Education courses, and careers counsellors in secondary education, clearly suggest that in the current situation, careers guidance is generally provided in "splendid isolation". As yet, in the Community Colleges currently being established, despite the fact that they may be considered as part of the sector of education most oriented towards innovation, there is absolutely no evidence of a well-founded and explicit policy relating to careers guidance. One may only guess at the situation in other segments of education.
Amongst Employment Boards, too, there is no clear or uniform policy on the provision of careers guidance. It appears that the importance attached by the employment offices to this form of service provision depends entirely on the (incidental) familiarity of the local or regional management, with this form of service provision. Although the despecialisation of careers guidance staff at employment offices was initiated partially in order to ensure better service provision in other fields, as yet, there is very little evidence of such integration. This is not only evidenced in the study by Helbing already quoted, but also by the evaluation studies covering reorientation discussions. A further consequence of despecialisation at regional and central level is that support is no longer provided for careers advisors, nor for the maintenance of the quality of the service provision. In addition, there is great uncertainty surrounding the question as to what facilities the Regional Employment Board should retain in-house, and what facilities should be called in, from outside.

The new concept of government must still be learnt by both parties, i.e. schools and government. The policy is still too operational. Deregulation demands that the central government implements a policy at a high level of abstraction; in other words, the objectives must be laid down, but the way in which these objectives should be achieved may only be suggested, in outline. The consequence of an insufficiently abstract policy is felt as an increase in the management burdens at every level, including that of schools.
This third problem is reflected in two different ways. Firstly in the form of a lack of practical guidance for schools and Regional Employment Boards from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences and the Central Employment Board. In areas where the central government merely wishes to evaluate the executive bodies in quantitative terms (according to numbers dealt with), the executive bodies are forced to operate "quick and dirty" (i.e. to become more calculating). Secondly, in the form of the lack of a practical vision in connection with the policy of schools and Regional Employment Boards in respect of the first, second and third line of careers guidance. By way of illustration, the Regional Employment Boards are complaining that the recommendations issued by the Advisory Bureaus for Education and Occupation are not "relevant to the job market", whilst such a reproach is only justifiable, in a situation whereby the tasks of the employment board are reduced to no more than direct placement.

In summary, it may be stated that the primary problem with which first, second and third line careers guidance will be faced is the lack of an articulated demand for service provision, on the part of the executive bodies (school managements and Regional Employment Boards). One point which must immediately be added is that as yet, the Advisory Bureaus for Education and Occupation are insufficiently capable of formulating a range of services which appeals to school heads and the Regional Employment Boards.
The conclusion could be drawn from this that on a social scale, there is no demand for this service. However, such a conclusion would be incorrect. Schools and Regional Employment Boards are confronted with enormous performance problems, to the solution of which improved careers guidance could make a major contribution - a point on which almost all parties

involved agree. However, this currently only rarely leads to explicit demands for guidance services (a) because schools and Regional Employment Boards are under pressure to "make a rapid score", whilst investments in the careers guidance only produce results on the longer term; and (b) because the actual establishment of a tailor-made structure within which the careers guidance generates optimum results is not only an organisational question, but also a managerial and a practical one. So far, the preconditions for "implementing strategy via networks" are absent in Regional Employment Boards and schools. We will return to this point at a later stage. For the time being, suffice it to say that the structural preconditions for a demand-oriented approach to careers guidance are at present almost totally absent.

Recommendation: *because from the point of view of performance, effective investments are necessary in measures which render educational tracks as efficient as possible, keep student motivation as high as possible, and at the same time keep early school-leaving rates as low as possible, the national government cannot yet withdraw entirely from this field; that same national government must itself bear joint responsibility until demand-oriented service provision is actually made possible.*

Proposed solutions: three new control mechanisms

(a) **Contract partnership in a policy aimed at establishing terms of reference.** Careers guidance and the transfer from education to work must be given form, in relation to independent schools, and a decentralised employment service. This development can best take form in partnership relationships, whereby the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences and the Central Employment Board leave the actual implementation to the educational institutions, the Regional Employment Boards and regional government.

(b) **Budget financing for establishing terms of reference.** The output from these contracts must be assessed according to a policy, and quality criteria aimed at establishing terms of reference. The new regulations for providing subsidies must also be integrated. Against this background, government involvement is vital, in relation to the establishment of terms of reference and quality.

(c) **Differentiated financing for performance.** This control mechanism entails enterprise risks, by inverting the sanctions imposed (rewards instead of punishment). In principle, every institution will receive a basic amount (for example 40%), plus the option of "earning" extra funding, in return for special efforts. For example, by helping problem target groups to obtain certificates or jobs. Differentiation can be introduced in respect of the level of this reward (analogous to the standards maintained in the past, in the educational priority policy). Such differentiated financing for performance could be introduced in schools, employment services, and Advisory Bureaus for Education and Occupation. The government funding will have to be provided under a different name; output-oriented, and as a reward for performance. This solution therefore also requires good quality control.

Outlines for a strategy for cooperation (1): the initial parameters

Solutions which take no or at least insufficient account of the reasons for which a new concept of government is being gradually introduced are alien to political reality, and as a consequence are non-productive, and sometimes even counter-productive. The point of departure for the new concept was the failure of the welfare state (or at least the realisation that the limits of the possibilities of the welfare state were in sight). The welfare state can be described as an attempt to regulate social developments via an extremely refined web of care structures, controlled by central government. However, any such method of government is increasingly facing an ever larger number of problems relating to (a) the necessity for government to justify its policies in respect of its citizens (the absence of which leads to calculation on the part of the citizens), (b) practical management (unmanageability) and (c) fiscal problems (non-affordability).

The legitimacy of government authority in a welfare state rests de facto on what Habermas described as "a policy of buying off the public". Once social problems have been placed on the political agenda as a result of action by pressure groups, the public is "bought off" by the government, via new care structures. In other words, no structural solution to the problems

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is sought; instead a distributive policy was selected, based on the idea of promoting the interests of individual groups. The net result is a "calculating citizen" who looses any notion whatsoever of his own responsibility towards society, as a whole.
The promotion of individual interests also results in unmanageability, not only because the claims which the various groups may make upon the care structures require accurate specification and monitoring (i.e. a circular policy), but also because such an approach effectively amounts to crisis management. The government is not involved in actual control, but is merely attempting to shut the door after the horse has bolted. In other words, what is established is "a huge variety of opinions and interests. Due to the complex interrelations between government and society, these differences are not only felt in society, but also within the government itself. The overall view is lost. And the business of government threatens to become unmanageable." In the opinion of Tjeenk Willink, "This is felt particularly strongly in times of economic slow-down and financial control". And it is precisely this latter problem which leads to fiscal problems. A policy of "buying off the populace" is only possible in a period of continuous economic growth. Stagnation results almost immediately in financial problems. However, due to the lack of a practical policy, these problems can only be solved "slice-by-slice", and as has become clear over the last few decades, such a bite-size policy is only effective for a very short space of time.

In summary: The problem facing the welfare state is that increasing demands are being placed on central government to solve acute problems, whilst the actual options open to central government to act in a consistent and coherent manner, are becoming ever less. This problem is sometimes described as the increase in the field of tension between the need for control (expressed by society) and the capacity for control (held by the government).
As previously mentioned, the solution is sought in introducing a differentiation between policy definition and policy implementation, which takes on concrete form in decentralisation and deregulation. The phenomenon of the "calculating citizen" is thus tackled in part by once again increasing the involvement of the citizen in local and regional politics (by giving the citizens a say, etc.), and in part by having the citizen contribute towards the costs (in the form of their own contributions, but also by introducing market mechanisms).

Any solutions for the "crisis in careers guidance" will therefore have to take account of the apparent failure of a centrally-controlled welfare state. Any solutions will (a) be forced not to move back towards a distributive policy, but will (b) have to fit in with a policy whereby the citizens and the service providers are obliged to bear their own responsibility, in which (c) not the interest of specific groups, but the common interest, will play a leading role. This final point implies that the quality of the service provision will be measured in terms of its contribution to the structural solution of social problems.

All these points together imply that in the new concept for government, quality cannot solely be based on what it represents in terms of content (as it could, under the regime of the welfare state), but that quality now also has aspects of government. In other words, good careers guidance will be measured according to two dimensions: one practical, and one political and social. The practical dimension will above all have to ensure coherence and consistency, from both a theoretical and an organisational point of view, in relation to the service provided. The political and social dimension will look more at the way in which the service provided contributes to the solution of social problems - within the limits of the new relationship between government and citizen.

Outlines for a strategy for cooperation (2): four new points of assessment

Today, education and occupation are no longer subject to a one-time selection. Today, we are faced with a permanent selection process. As a consequence, it is becoming increasingly important that people learn how to determine their own educational and occupational futures, for themselves. For careers guidance, this provides four assessment points:

a. careers guidance must not target the problem of selection as if it were merely a question of providing the correct information. It must now relate to the establishment of a working identity; in other words, it must enable a student during the learning process to gradually formulate for him or herself an ever-clearer answer to the question, "what does work mean to me?"

The aim of the guidance is therefore not to provide information, but "empowerment", or enabling the student to acquire so-called "careers skills";

b. careers guidance should therefore no longer be a one-off affair, targeted solely at specified "selection moments" but it should be a continuous and structured process. Establishing a working identity is a learning process which takes years to complete, and schools must react to this fact;

c. careers guidance must make sufficient differentiation between the various target groups, in particular between boys and girls and allochthonous and autochthonous residents. The establishment of a working identity is a process which takes a different course for different groups of people, and that fact must be taken into account.

d. careers guidance must be accessible.

Outlines for a cooperation strategy for cooperation (3): strategic partnership

Strategic partnership means that the parties work together on the basis of their shared individual interests. A strategic partnership is maintained for as long as it offers mutual advantages (synergy) but is terminated, as soon as it offers no further competitive edge.

The five most important requirements for development are:

- The joining of forces by all parties
- A minimal definition of collectivity
- Concentration on broad outlines, with freedom to determine details
- Adapted development rate
- Balanced agreement, advantageous to all parties.

Strategy can best be implemented via flexible, dynamic networks: in other words, using a network as a strategic tool to enable individual organisations to attain common, joint objectives. For example, facilities management (i.e. establishing permanent relationships with external facilities). The authority positions within such a relationship depend on the contributions made by each party. Here too, as a rule, the network is immediately dissolved as soon as it no longer offers any social advantage.

In conclusion: establishing an individual profile in the careers guidance field

It is absolutely vital that the entire careers guidance field clearly (but modestly) establishes its own identity, whilst taking full account of the wishes of its clients.
One of the major problems at this particular time would seem to be the almost total "invisibility" of careers guidance, particularly at a political level.

Cliff Spracklen

Quality and careers guidance in the UK

Historically 'quality', in Careers Guidance was input, or process-orientated. Inspections of Careers Services by the Careers Service Inspectorate focused heavily on the Vocational Guidance interview.

Training courses taught Counsellors how to conduct guidance interviews against the "Seven Point Plan" - a checklist of 7 points that constituted a "good interview". This included concepts such as putting the client at ease, establishing rapport, providing information as well as establishing an appropriate physical environment for the interview.

Inspectors built upon these concepts, refined them and established their own checklist for assessing guidance interviews. Establishing the clients' needs and providing the feedback to the client became part of the process, but the quality assessment remained Counsellor focused.

New pre-vocational initiatives in the 1980s started to shift the focus. Most notable of these was the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) which established the concept of the "entitlement curriculum". Featured of the TVEI development included pupils entitlement to various pre-vocational experiences. These included entitlement to access new technology through the whole spectrum of the, curriculum, access to experiential learning, including work experience and access to a more output-focused vocational guidance provision.

"How Was It for You?"

Suddenly, the client was sovereign. Careers Services started to realise that they could ask clients what they thought of the careers guidance they had received, so that programmes could be modified as a result of feedback from clients.

The concept of the Client, or Customer-feedback Survey was born.

At first, these were mostly conducted "in-house", but eventually Careers Services became confident enough to expose themselves to a more public scrutiny, by arranging for others to carry out surveys.

Indeed, the Employment Department commissioned the Institute of Manpower Studies to research different models of Customer Surveys (using questionnaires, one-to-one interviews, etc.) so that models are now -available. Bradford Careers Service was one of 6 Services in the UK to participate in this research. The bold Services even started to ask clients in advance what they expected from the Careers Service.

However, quality became equated with the extent to which the guidance process met the clients expressed needs, and the extent to which clients expressed satisfaction with the guidance received. It had thus moved into a more client-centred, or output-focused arena.

"They Don't Know What's Good For Them"

The remaining flaw in the previous approach was that in a situation where careers guidance services were under-resourced (and in many areas not all pupils or students could be guaranteed a guidance interview) many clients could be extremely grateful for even the most minimal service. Many a student has been grateful for the simple fact that a Careers Officer was a friendly face, at a time of anxiety.

In other words, expectations by clients of the Careers Guidance process have, in the past, been quite low in many parts of the UK. Clients did not know what entitlement they might have for Careers Guidance - and may have been grateful for whatever they could get. Client entitlement was not always well publicised "..... in case we were overwhelmed by the demand".

"Publish and Be Damned"

The recent legislation in the UK, the Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act, 1993 (TURER) changed the legislative base of the Careers Service in the UK. It removed the statutory responsibility for delivering the Careers Service from the Local Education Authority (LEA) to the Secretary of State for Employment.

It paved the way for competitive tendering for the delivery of Careers Services. However, it had another effect. It raised the profile of Careers Guidance, in the UK and brought in its wake a much more prescriptive base for Careers Guidance.

A detailed prescription for all Careers Services is now contained in "The Requirements and Guidance for Careers Service Providers".

This hefty document prescribes in detail what Careers Services must provide in terms of:

- Information about routes and opportunities.
- Labour Market information.
- Advice and guidance services to individuals.
- Placement services.
- Support services to educational and training organisations, employers and parents.

A particular emphasis is made on the need to ensure that all potential clients are aware of their entitlements.

"Catch Them early"

Just as Europe is adopting the notion of guidance for life-long learning, and accepting that individuals may have guidance needs at any stage in life, the UK has recognised that a more, effective guidance provision will emerge if it is build on a solid preparatory base at a younger age.

The recent Government White Paper on Competitiveness 1994 gave the process a further

boost. Careers Guidance was to be supported with a further injection of funds, but this funding was to be focused on guidance for pupils aged 14 and 15. But Government wanted an entitlement to guidance for 14 and 15 year old pupils.

This entitlement has been embellished by clear guidelines about what a 14 year old. pupil might expect from a Careers Service, in terms of interview and group activity time. Again, an emphasis is placed on Careers Services informing pupils (and also parents) of the entitlement, and the range of services available.

"We Only Buy Quality"

The other determinant of quality has been the impact in recent years of the Careers Service being in the position of provider, or seller of services to various purchasers (or customers). Many Services have added to their core resource through the winning of contracts to provided "enhancements' to the guidance menu, or guidance to non-core clients such as adults.

Customers have been TECS, government departments or the European Commission. The contract has usually included a quality compliance agreement, and a subsequent quality audit.

Most Careers Services have sold services to TECs who have their own prospectus for quality compliance. Such quality audits have tended to focus on the organisation and have included financial control, marketing, staff development, systems issues - as well as professional, and outcome-related matters. This principle is now included as part of the Requirements for Careers Service Providers under the competitive tendering process.

The tendering process requires bidders to describe their Quality Assurance Strategy. This includes both the overall strategy and culture, but also has to cover each individual operational objective. All operational objectives must be SMART (Strategic, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and delivered within a Timescale).

Quality in this sense has moved on to the nature of the organisation and its overall processes. Elements of an overall Quality Assurance Strategy have included the Kitemarks for Investors in People (IIP) and BS5750 (which is about systems).

Total Quality Management (TQM) concepts developed in the USA have become increasingly prevalent in Education, with the emphasis here being on 'quality culture' and its ownership by staff.

"What About the Workers?"
Quality in the training of Guidance Counsellors

I referred, at the Dublin meeting last year, to the work of the Advice, Guidance Counselling and Psychotherapy lead body. The consultative document attempted to define the competencies of workers in the field within the National Vocational Qualification framework.

This hefty tome covers a wider range of professional practice than careers guidance, and identifies a whole range of generic competencies.

The approach is currently being trialled by a number of Careers Services who will be providing feedback.

The outcome is not yet available, but a recurring theme amongst Careers Advisers is concern about the lack of "underpinning knowledge" requirements in a document that is skills, or competency-based.

Ethics and Sleaze

The rallying cry of Careers Services has always been that "..... we are the only neutral, or impartial agency involved in guidance". This argument suggests that everyone else has a vested interest in the outcomes for young people.

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Certainly, major concerns have been expressed about the pressures exerted by educational institutions to retain pupils, at the expense of what is best for the individual. A particular tension has been the allegation that some schools prevent information about other providers (notably. Further Education Colleges) from reaching pupils. This has arisen as schools have developed vocational courses which mirror provision previously mainly offered by the FE sector.

The FE College Charter now requires schools to make information about opportunities in this sector available in their institutions.

Concerns have been expressed by the Audit Commission report, "Unfinished Business" about "drop out rates" from Post-16 education, and conclusions are drawn about the need for effective, impartial guidance. The fact that the Training Credits initiatives often included resources for "enhanced guidance" led to some, suggestions from schools that some Careers Services may be less than impartial, as some of their funding was linked to the numbers entering the initial training provision funded by Training Credits.

However, most Careers Advisers are still able to resist the exhortations from schools, colleges, training providers and employers to promote their opportunities. This influence ranges from attractive promotional leaflets, to sophisticated presentations and hospitality.

Whilst by and lange, Careers Advisers are able to support their clients and remain impervious to these pressures, it would be an interesting research exercise to study influence of opportunity providers on guidance practitioners (is there a subliminal influence?).

The other area of ethical concern has been around organisational ethics. The Institute of Careers Guidance has expressed its concern before, and since, the recent legislation about the potential effects of having Careers Guidance delivered by private, profit-making organisations. The UK Heads of Careers Service Organisations, the Institute of Careers Guidance and the Association of Training and Enterprise Councils issued a joint statement about the criteria and a Code of Practice for Careers Service Providers, as part of the consultation before the TURER Bill became enacted.

Does Quality = Glossy?

Careers Guidance practitioners are now steeped in quality concerns. They are all trying to get IIP status, or BS5750, or both. They are writing Quality Assurance Strategies and producing glossy Supplement Statements. Services are appointing Quality Assurance Managers, and Consultants specialising in Quality are getting rich by organising Quality Forums, training courses, etc.

There are glossy booklets around, about how to do it. The one danger I see, is that people are so busy designing policies, documents and strategies (or chasing Kitemarks) that they become exhausted by the process - and lack the energy to actually implement the policies.

Quality must ultimately, be a 'grass roots' concept where practitioners are trained to the highest standards, and deliver not only to those agreed standards, but to the standards expected by a well informed clientele.

Further Reading

By far the best serious study is a very timely publication, commissioned by the new National Advisory Council for Careers and Educational Guidance. It bas been written by Ruth Hawthorn of NICEC - and is called "First Steps - A quality Standards Framework for Guidance Across All Sectors".

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Breeda Coyle
A practising guidance counsellor, part-time lecturer and assessor on the Counselling Diploma Course in University College, Maynooth. President of the I.G.C. 1989 - 1993, P.R.O., 1993 - 1995. currently an Executive Member of the I.G.C.

Quality Issues for Guidance Counsellors in Ireland:

Perspective of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors

The Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC) was established in 1968. It represents over 700 practitioners who work mostly in second level schools and in other settings. All its members have a university degree and a post-graduate qualification or its equivalent in guidance and counselling.

The Institute has a constitution and a code of ethics. It represents the best interests of its members and of the clients it serves. It promotes standards for entry into the profession and for the practice of guidance and counselling. It supports the professional development of its members through in-career training. It publishes a Journal (annual) and a Newsletter (five times within the school year).
On behalf of its members and their clients the Institute has a liaison and advocacy role with government departments, trade unions, parent bodies, higher education institutions employment and training agencies, representatives of industry, and a wide range of non-Government organisations.

Irish guidance and counselling has a unique position amongst the models of guidance and counselling evident in Europe today. The remit of guidance counsellors in educational settings encompasses the three areas of personal/social, educational and career guidance and counselling. As such the service is a hybrid of the best practices of the American model which tends to emphasize personal counselling and the European model which almost entirely focuses on the concept of career guidance. Thus, even in its genesis the model of guidance and counselling as practised in Ireland deals with the individual in a holistic integrated way.

Before looking at the specific quality issues for Irish guidance and counselling practitioners it is useful to set out the current governmental concerns with these issues.
Irish education has undergone recently a regorous analysis of all aspects of its remit. In order to initiate the debate the Government issued a Green Paper on Education in 1992.
One of the five expressed aims of this paper was...."to create a system of effective quality assurance". (1) This quality assurance, would, in the main, be carried out by the Inspectorate. Their tasks would be:

- To evaluate the school system
- To make an annual report on the performance of the school system
- To make detailed reports on important themes (2)

In The White Paper on Education Charting our Education Future 1995 the Department of Education maintained that ..."the state should ensure and promote the highest standard of education and learning for all and "Quality is brought about by maximizing the efforts of all those responsible for the education of students and by co-ordinating all the structures of the system so that centres of education, from pre-school to university, are effective - that is, places where effective teaching, learning and research take place and where the highest standards of achievement are obtained by every student, appropriate to their ability". (3)

In its submission to the Green Paper the I.G.C. outlined a vision of quality which was even more regorous and far-reaching than that of the government. It set our the ideal "of promoting the highest standards in guidance and counselling practice". (4) It stated very clearly that the elements of training, funding and evaluation were necessary preconditions of a quality service. A minimal quality service would require that all practitioners receive:

(i) A proper full-time pre-school training.

(ii) State funded in-career training.
The submission asserted that in-career training is a significant support of the development of quality outcomes in education.

The report also claimed that:

(i) The maintenance of a quality service involves the evaluation of the guidance and counselling service as part of the "whole school review". Such an evaluation, it was asserted, would need to be carried out by someone conversant with the aims and objectives of the service, and with a clear understanding of the role and work of the guidance counsellor.

(ii) A clear commitment on funding would also be required in order to meet the needs of students and parents.

(iii) A review of the information service provided would be an essential part of monitoring the development of the quality service provided to students. (6)

The questions were raised as to how:

- The personal and social development of students was to be reviewed
- How the quality of skills employed by guidance counsellor was to be monitored

It was suggested that the way forward in this area might be to eliminate the divisions between quality review and quality development. In other words that self, peer and supervisor review might also become the means whereby skills were enhanced. Basically, it stated that a quality review of a service needs to be both

quantitative and qualitative.

In 1993 the I.G.C. commissioned Professor Liam Ryan of Maynooth College to conduct a national survey of second level schools: Counselling the Adolescent in a Changing Ireland. Its aim was: "an assessment of the counselling needs of young people in second level schools". (7) It attempted to look at client concerns in counselling.

The issue of staffing and of a reasonable ratio of guidance counsellors to students necessary to ensure the delivery of an effective quality service was not addressed by either the Green or White Papers on Education. Such a recognition would have obvious cost implications for the system. The I.G.C., however, as a member og The Schools' Guidance Committee (8) maintained that the guidance counsellors

- should not teach
- should be engaged full-time in the practice of guidance and counselling and
- there should be a ratio of 1 guidance counsellor to every 250 students.

It contended that the model of evaluation should be expanded to include a "whole system" review i.e. that all elements of a system be encluded:

- Pupils
- Guidance Counsellor
- Management
- The Inspectorate

The I.G.C. has developed and maintained a very clear, self-imposed vision of quality for itself and for its members. This was not inspired or generated, in any way, by government policy. Elements of this quality vision include:

1. A consistent programme of in-career training (conducted by guidance and counselling experts from Europe and America.) based on the results of a needs analyses survey.

2. The development of a c8stomized post-professional training course to be jointly accredited by a University and the I.G.C.

3. The introduction and sponsorship of specialist-counselling training programmes from America and Britain.

4. A constant lobbying of successive governments for the optimum conditions of service and financing.

5. A watchdog function as consultants and assessors of careers information, both print and media.

6. Developers of quality careers information materials eg. Qualifax.

7. A rigorous code of ethics for members.

8. A requirement that members undertake a minimum amount of in-career training in order to retain membership.

It could be said that the I.G.C. has anticipated and, indeed, surpassed expressed governmental quality standards. Current quality practice amongst members ranges over a number of different approaches: the trandescent approach, the product based, the consumer or user based approach and from the government perspective, the value-based approach. (9) I believe that a service area such as guidance and counselling may best be served by a multifaceted approach to quality standards.
From an organisational point of view the I.G.C. has benefited greatly from its membership of European organisations e.g. European Association for Counselling, EURO-ORIENTATION. It has also gained by its participation in projects such as TENET and by involvement in PETRA developmental projects in guidance e.g. Joint Quality Standards in Guidance, RIO.

Footnotes

1. Education for a Changing World: Green Paper, (Ireland, 1992) p.22.
2. Ibid.
3. Charting Our Education Future: White Paper on Education, (Dublin, 1995) p.9.
4. Submission on the Green Paper "Education for a Changing Worldd (The I.G.C., Dublin, March, 1993) p.2.
5. Up to 1994 practitioners paid for their own in-career training.
6. Ibid, p.18.
7. Professor Liam Ryan
   Counselling the Adolescent in A Changing Ireland; Survey of Second Level Schools in Ireland, (I.G.C. Dublin, 1993) p.11
8. An official Department of Education Committee set up my the Minister for Education in 1990 to examine the area of guidance and counselling. Its report has yet to be published.
9. Mariet Herle
   "Quality Management in Vocational Guidance (1995), p.3.

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Quality management in vocational guidance

"What is good, Phaedrus,
and what is not good -
should we ask anybody to tell us that?"

What is quality?
"How did you build up this art collection", the journalist asked the couple who recently donated their life's work to the Dutch Singer Museum. "We looked for quality", they answered. They did not have to discuss what quality was, they just 'knew'.

Quality in industrial companies
During the eighties I worked as a P.R.- officer at SOM, the Dutch vocational training body for the metal trade. For the first time in my life I visited large and small factories - an attractive and sometimes frightening world in which I felt quite ignorant at times. Why had I not paid more attention to physics and maths at school? Quality care and quality management had just come into fashion. And so it happened that I saw large quality manuals, which described processes with painstaking care; I saw certificates decorating the board's room; I heard the proud story of a small Dutch factory which made parts of the Space Shuttle, entirely to specifications. Co-makership, just-in-time delivery and quality circles were widely discussed. It seemed necessary for the industry to define its standards. There should not be too much waste, errors were counted. Co-makership had to do with training. Only welders who had certain qualifications were allowed to work on certain products.

Quality and communication
At the same time I decided to re-read Pirsig's "Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance", as I had the idea this might offer me a view on technology in general. Quality appeared to be the major theme of this novel, in which a flunked-out professor and his young son travel through the USA. He no longer believes in the idea of quality as a prescription, the kind of digital computer manuals that he has to write. What he hates about it is that they are 'spectators' manuals: they isolate the machine in time and space. The users' attitude towards the machine - whether it is a computer or a motorbike - is not taken into account.
He thinks that a step-by-step-description of repairing your bike is not enough. There are also subjective parts, like the attitude you take to repairing. Phaedrus, the main character of the professor, refuses to define quality. According to him, subjective notions like 'job satisfaction' have to be taken into account.

There I was, back to my own subject: communication. The skilled labourers I saw in the factories appeared to spend a lot of time drinking coffee next to the machine while discussing how to solve a technical problem. Not only were statistics necessary to prevent mistakes, communication was essential. Programs were started in factories with large billboards that announced how many days had passed without errors. The best boss of the month was elected, internal communications and motivating programs were started.

Quality in services

When I started teaching at a communications faculty, communications in services had gradually become an issue. A problem is that in services, quality is unclear and reparation of 'non-quality' is impossible. Consumers don't know how to judge quality. Lewis and Booms describe service quality as follows: 'Service quality is a measure of how well the service level delivered matches customer expectations. Delivering quality service means conforming to customer expectations on a consistent basis'.

So far so good when you try to apply this sort of definition to a service directly bought, like a bank service or a hotel booking. In some services, however, like education and vocational guidance, there is an additional problem: it is often not clear who the client is, as the client is not the same person as the one who pays for the service. Are a school's clients the students, their parents, the labour market or is it the government who pays?

Like other serviceorganisations, schools could be judged from quality management standards. HICO (Higher Information and Communication Education), the institute where I teach, has been selected as an example of quality management in higher education. What did we do to deserve that? All sorts of educational and organisational procedures have been registered with painstaking care, statistics of the students' progress are analysed regularly, regular surveys amongst students register what they think of the programme, and the other clients, the professional field, has a structural influence on the quality of the programmes. In European connections, HICO is selected as an example of good practice in quality care in higher education.

Definitions and systems of quality

Garvin defines five approaches to quality:

The trandescent approach

Deriving from 'the best possible', the optimum. Applied to vocational guidance with this approach, an ideal match should be reached between self-development of the individual and social/economic needs. The trandescent approach behind vocational guidance would be: the right person in the right position. Anything less - like unemployed people, people who are dissatisfied with their jobs, vacancies which are hard to fill, etc. - signifies a lack of quality of the whole system.

One could say that the standards which the National Council of Vocational Guidance, of which I am a member, has defined are trandescent standards. We think that good careers guidance should be:

Continuous

There should be a continuing line of choice-assistance from primary education to secondary education, higher education and the labour market.

Process-driven

Any guidance should fit harmoniously with the development of the client

Differentiated

Guidance should vary according to age, sex, ethnic background etc.

Accessible

Everybody should be able to use vocational guidance services. This is especially important for the underprivileged.

The product based approach

Describing the characteristics of the product. In vocational guidance this would mean attention for the methodology of the guidance, the quality of materials, etc. The recently developed code for brochures of higher education by LDC fits into this category.

The user-based approach

In which the subjective opinion of the client counts. In vocational guidance this would mean that the pupil is satisfied with the sympathetic ear of the careers teacher, that parents and children can find the right place to get advice on which school to choose, that youngsters are happy with the advice on the choice of subject, that the unemployed are happy with the advice

given by the Employment Office, and... that this advice works! That children indeed finish the kind of secondary education they have been adviced to take, that the unemployed really get that particular job.

The manufacturing-based approach
Does the product meet its specifications? In Holland, the product has not been sufficiently specified. How 'much' guidance can be handed out within a tight budget?
This is the sort of problem that AOBs in Holland have: who specifies the product and who will pay for it? Generally speaking once this is done, ISO-rules tend to cover the manufacturing-based aproach.

The value-based approach
- Does the product offer value for money in the eyes of the client. In terms of vocational guidance: is the service worthwhile?
- In the eyes of the government: who pays for it? In fact, on this level one should balance the cost of free (i.e. subsidised by the government) advice against the cost of lifelong social security.
- In the case of products of LDC and AOB paid for by schools and employment offices: are they willing to pay that price for this sort of product?
- In the case of the private paying client: is the service worthwhile in the eyes of the consumer?

Most systems for quality management in services seem to be user-based rather than anything else, according to Neijzen & Trompetter. This definitely does not hold true for Dutch vocational guidance.

State of the art of ISO in services and advice
A lot of quality systems feature ISO rather than a user-based approach. ISO means International Organisation for Standarization. This organisation has made the general standards.

Levels of ISO
What do they aim for? ISO consists of four parts:
ISO 9000: general quality care
ISO 9001: quality care in designing, manufacturing, application and after care
ISO 9002: specific quality care during manufacturing and application
ISO 9003: the quality system for final inspection and trial ISO 9004: assurance of the quality system within the organisation.
The 9002-standard is the most used, as it describes the communication between manufacturer and client, thus covering the majority of Dutch exports.
The most popular bureaus of certification are Bureau Veritas Quality International (BVQI), Lloyds Register Quality Assurances (LRQA) and the Dutch KEMA-institute.
ISO 9004 forces the managing director to analyse with his employees what the purpose of the company is. Once this is made clear in a mission statement, and once there are fixed procedures, one can speak of quality management 7). For small companies this is often sufficient, maintains H. Gundlach, managing director of the Dutch Council for Certification.

Britons and Dutch keen on ISO-certification
According to 'Specifiek', a publication of KDI in Rotterdam, Great Britain, Belgium and the Netherlands appear to be champions in certification. Out of 45,000 certified companies worldwide 20 - 30,000 are in Great Britain. In the USA, Germany, France, Belgium and the Netherlands the amount ranges around 2,000 per country.

Certiked, the club of Dutch knowledge and advice industry
Holland is the first country to certify services. Recently the "Stichting Certificatie Kennisintensieve Bedrijven" (Certiked) (Foundation for Certification of Knowledge-intensive Enterprises) has been established.
In this foundation participate:
- ROA (Raad van Organisatie-adviesbureaus), Dutch bureaus for organisational advice
- NOBOL (Nederlandse Organisatie van bureaus voor Outplacement en Loopbaan begeleiding), Dutch organisation of bureaus for Outplacement and job guidance
- VMO (Vereniging van Markt-onderzoekbureaus), Dutch organisation for marketing research
- VETRON, (Vereniging van Trainings- en Opleidingsinstituten), Dutch society for non-subsidized training- and education bodies)

- VPRA (Vereniging van Public Relations Adviesbureaus), Dutch society of Public Relations Advice bureaus)

I have not yet heard of Dutch AOBs joining this initiative.
In taking care of quality of services ISO 9001 deals with price quotation, research, project-management, finishing and after-care. Company policy, organisation, training, education and experience, recruitment, selection, and archives control also belong to the basics. ROA also evaluates professional behaviour, independence, potential for development and quality.

Technical companies look beyond ISO
While at present everybody in services and in non-profit organisations is busy with quality standards and certification, even in technology the hey-day of certification is over. According to Peter Barrett of Salford University certified engineers and architectural firms did not acquire significantly more assignments. According to Spekkink who designed the branche-models for quality management of ONRI and BNA (the Dutch engineers and architects) the value of the Lloyd's mark of certification on your letters is of limited value. Certification can be a useful process, but it is not the first and only goal of quality management.
And so we are back at Pirsig and his motorcycle.

Pirsig's Quality from 1991: Take care of your goodness
Pirsig did not stop thinking after the success of the motorcycle story. In 1991 followed the novel Lila, which ends as follows: "The Dakota Indian considers goodness to be a noun rather than an adjective. He will tell somone 'Take care of your goodness' rather than 'Be good'. Good was a noun. That was it. Good as a noun rather than an adjective is all the metaphysics of quality is about."

Statements

The economic actors are not yet aware of the value of vocational guidance
Wrong allocation of education and jobs costs society a lot of money. Unfortunately quality in vocational guidance has so far not been defined in terms of value for money for our society, the government and businesses alike.
So far the cost of vocational guidance is more paid by educational and social actors than by economical actors. It is important to define quality in terms of socio-economical 'value for money'.

There is not enough attention for co-makership
When you know that choosing a profession is a process in which people might need guidance at various stages, it seems very important that the various professionals who deal with advice should deliver a good system for co-makership of this advice.

Quality in co-makership is not defined by the final user
In all co-makership systems the specifications are derived from the final product. In vocational services this means to me that the wishes and needs of the final client, the individual, should be the standard from which the shared view of LDC, AOB's and schools should derive.

Lack of user-based approach
On all levels of vocational guidance there is not enough quality management from a user-based approach.

Governmental level
At governmental level nobody has any figures about the needs of the individual (youngsters, their parents, adults). We know what is wrong: how many drop-outs there are from schools, how many unemployed, how many unmarried mothers on social security. We know what the cost is of those problems. But we don't know how many people would like to be advised in what way. When you want to measure quality of vocational guidance on a national level, there is no parameter to measure it against.

Advisers level
On the level of the advisers (school counsellors, counsellors at the AOBs and labour exchanges etc) there is the same problem. They don't know how large their 'market' is for a start, so

that you cannot measure whether the goals are reached. And, moreover, they don't measure the appreciation and the successes of their services.

The level of the techniques and materials

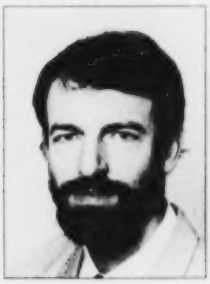
On the level of the techniques and materials the market mechanism works between the intermediaries, if it works. AOBs decide what sort of services to offer to schools, LDC decides what products to make to answer the needs of the schools and the AOBs. When quality is measured, it is measured from the specifications of the intermediaries instead of from the final user.

Fourth section:

Industrial quality norms in guidanc

With the introduction of the principles of market economy in the public sector, also much of the vocabulary has changed. Guidance counsellors become "service providers", guidance becomes a "product", and the public are the "customers" who have a right to expect quality services for the money they are paying via their taxes. In this climate it is little wonder that "ISO 9000" and "EFQM" have become buzzwords that have been used and misused in a number of ways. When the ENIGMA-group decided to take on board the issue of industrial quality norms used in a guidance context, one of the first discoveries was that despite the frequent bandying-about of these terms, very little concrete experience was actually available and very limited expertise at hand. The focus was, therefore, first and foremost on answering the most basic questions on industrial quality norms: What exactly are they? What can they be used for? How can they be applied to guidance services? These are the issues that are dealt with in this section. Both on a theoretical level and by giving examples of good - and bad - practice.

The contributors are a mixed bag of ISO 9000-experts and of guidance specialists with various levels of knowledge and experience of industrial quality norms. Søren Borch describes the basics of the ISO 9000 system and demonstrates how it can be applied to guidance services. Eric Mooijman and Ronald Stevens compare the two quality systems (ISO 9000 and EFQM) that are commonly used in KISOs (Knowledge Intensive Service Organisations - to which guidance services belong). As an expert on quality norms and a guidance counsellor at the same time, Anita Faucompret charts the ups and downs accompanying the introduction of ISO 9001 into the Belgian PMS-centres (PMS = Psycho-Medical-Social). Finally two laypersons - Lisbeth Højdal from the Technical College of Hillerød and Frank Witkamp from the Employment Service in Alkmaar - have each their very different tale to tell about the introduction of an ISO 9000-certification at their workplace.



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ISO 9000 in vocational guidance

ISO 9000 has become a buzzword in business. It is now also considered for vocational guidance. Why is this so ? What is product quality and quality systems ? What is an ISO 9000 certificate ? These are some of the questions that will be taken up in the following brief introduction to the series of ISO 9000 standards.

What is quality

Quality depends on expectations. If a customer buys 20 apples and expects some 80% to be good, he will have a sensation of high quality if 90% are good. On the contrary, if he expects 100% to be good and only 95% are OK, then he is unsatisfied. Furthermore the customer's satisfaction with the grocer does not depend only on the fruits but also on price, service and advertised image. All in all, for the customer, quality is the total sensation of doing business with the supplier.

More formally one may define:

> **Quality:** The totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs.

A good business relation depends on mutually accepted expectations of service and counter service. In a business transaction more complex than the above, the partners will have a contract defining product specifications, price and delivery conditions.

What is a quality system

If a customer buys an aeroplane, he may not accept the risks or the costs of even small product defects after purchase, and neither may he want to engage himself in the tedious job of controlling all components after purchase and before usage. He may therefore demand an extra element in the contract, specifying features of the quality system that controls design, production, and delivery of the aeroplane. A contract for quality products may thus include:

1. Product specifications
2. Price agreement

3. Delivery plan
4. Quality system specifications.

This brings in the essential definition of:

Quality system: The organisational structure, responsibilities, procedures, processes and resources for implementing quality management.

What is ISO 9000

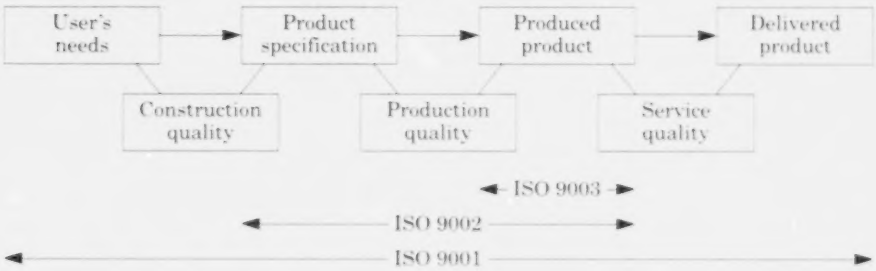
Quality system specifications (point 4 above) is the domain of ISO 9000 standards. Use of ISO 9000 standards implies a standardized description of the quality system's features. But beware, ISO 9000 tells nothing as to the quality of the product. This is described in the product specifications.

As mentioned, ISO 9000 has become a popular topic these last years. But in reality there is nothing new in using quality system standards. The ISO 9000 is based on the BS 5750 standard (UK standard originated in the early 1970's). This again is based on the AQAP standard (NATO standard from the 1960's) which was heavily inspired by the MIL-Q standard (USA defense, late 1950's). By the way, ISO 9000 standards are equivalent to the EN29000 standards of the European Committee for Standardization, CEN.

ISO, the International Organisation for Standardization, has published an ISO 9000 family of standards, containing 18 approved standards plus a number of draft standards.

Scope of the central ISO 9000 standards

The process of creating a product includes the following intermediary stages and qualities:



This figure also indicates the content of the three standard models for contractual requirements on quality systems:

ISO 9001: Model for quality assurance in design development, production, installation and servicing.
This standard is used in contract situations when conformance to specified requirements is to be assured by the supplier during several stages which may include design/development, production, installation, delivery, and servicing. It is used when the contract requires development, and when the product specifications are given mainly as functional demands.

ISO 9002: Model for quality assurance in production and installation.
This standard is used in contract situations when conformance to specified requirements is to be assured by the supplier during production and installation. This is relevant when product specifications and/or constructions already exist and are accepted.

ISO 9003: Model for quality assurance in final inspection and test.
This standard is used in contract situations when conformance to specified requirements is to be assured by the supplier solely at final inspection and test.

ISO 9003 and 9002 assure, at different levels, a coherence between specifications and product, but do not guarantee that specifications fulfil the needs of the user. For this ISO 9001 is better.

The above standards are designed from a customer's point of view for use in a contract situation. Supplementary to these, the ISO 9000 series includes standard guidelines for general use:

ISO 9000: Guidelines for selection and use of standards.

ISO 9004: Guidelines for quality management and quality system elements.

ISO 9000 for services

In the ISO 9000 world it is now good practice to distinguish between four generic product categories:

Hardware
Software
Bulkware
Services.

In spite of differences between the product types, the ISO standards 9001, 9002 and 9003, originally developed for hardware, should also be used for services and for the other categories. The guidelines 9000 and 9004 have now been developed in several version. The ISO 9004-2 is of speciel interest here, as it is concerned with guidelines for quality systems in service delivering organisations.

Why ISO 9000

Customers may have different purposes for imposing external requirements on suppliers' quality systems. Likewise, suppliers themselves may choose to implement quality systems for one or more reasons. Some reasons are for example:

- Producing better products due to positive correlation between product quality and quality system features
- Reducing costs of defects in the total value chain
- Obtaining security and confidence
- Cost reduction and speeding up of quality assurance activities related to the contract transaction
- Motivation of the people in the organisation
- Fulfilling specific customer demands, obtaining orders
- Gaining competitive advantage in the market place.

The reasons are not new, but they are gaining impetus. This growing interest for ISO 9000 probably stems from increasing internationalization, competition from a buyer's market, and complex integration of organisations in network structures.

For the vocational guidance organisation it will be important to realize which of these reasons - if any - constitute the motivating factor(s) for developing quality systems.

ISO 9000 certification

In many cases, a systematic audit and a quality system certificate, may make the quality system more convincing from the point of view of either the customer or the management of the supplier organisation. The purpose of an audit is to ensure that the implemented real-life practice, attitudes, documentation, and procedures of the quality system corresponds to the contractually agreed quality policy, handbook etc.

The contract partners may choose between different levels of auditing:

4. Accredited organisation, 3'rd part audit
3. Independent organisation, 3'rd part audit

2. Customer, 2'nd part audit
1. Supplier, 1'st part audit

The two partners may audit the quality system themselves, but they may also wish to have an independent organisation do the auditing, or even choose to use one of the accredited auditing organisations. These are especially qualified organisations that have been approved by (national) accrediting bodies to certify quality systems according to the ISO 9000 standards.

Other certification situations

In general, certifications may be given to:
- Products, e.g. dangerous machines, electrical material, medical drugs, or even services
- Systems, e.g. production or training systems
- Quality systems
- Persons
- Test laboratories and inspecting organisations.

It is worth while noting that the ISO 9000 series is only concerned with quality systems! For example, ISO 9001 requires: "The supplier shall establish and maintain procedures for identifying the training needs and provide for the training of all personnel ....". But ISO 9001 itself does not prescribe any absolute requirement as to the amount or features of the training. This depends on each situation and contract agreement.

Vocational guidance is a service

In the ISO 9004-2 we have the following definition:

> **Service:** The results generated, by activities at the inter face between the supplier and the customer and by the supplier internal activities, to meet customer needs.

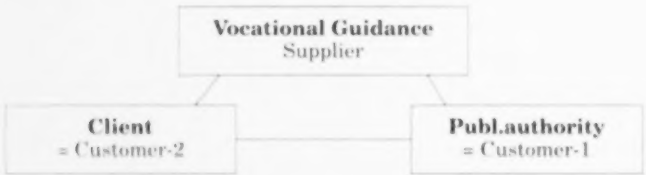
Services may have a high or low content of the other generic products. Vocational guidance is a product composed of statistical information, pamphlets, books, personal service, and maybe computer aided guidance. Normally the service part is the crucial one, and therefore vocational guidance is best classified as a service.

Services differ from other products by having the following characteristics:
1. Intangible, difficult to measure
2. Can not be stocked
3. Difficult to evaluate before purchase
4. Tailoring for individual customers is often possible and necessary
5. Close contact between supplier/producer and customer in the production process
6. Production, sale and delivery is often simultaneous
7. Little competition from foreign countries.

It is difficult to guarantee the effects of the vocational guidance on the client, since the effects depend not only on the efforts of the guidance counsellor, but also on motivation and efforts of the client. As the Japanese say: "The customer is the most important part of the production line".

The complex structure in vocational guidance

In most vocational guidance constellations we do not only have the traditional two partners. We have three partners:



The ISO 9000 based contract is between the supplier and the public authority (customer-1). The situation is complex, amongst others because the quality perceptions of the two customer types are often conflicting, yet confounded.

This complexity also holds true for a number of other public services as well as for advertisements in media etc.

Quality systems for vocational guidance

In most cases, the control of characteristics of the service and service delivery can only be achieved by controlling the process delivering the service.

If an informal practice has proven adequate, the contract partners may choose to avoid investing in expensive formalization and documentation activities. But in many cases a formalized and documented quality system is cost-beneficial. And only the latter system can be ISO 9000 certified.

Documentation may take place at different levels:

1. Strategic level
   Goals and policies. Documented in the strategic plan and the quality manual
2. Tactic level
   Procedures and business routines. Documented in the quality manual
3. Operational level
   Documented in blue prints, specifications, printed forms, tools etc.

ISO 9004-2 lists a number of elements to consider in quality systems for services. They focus on the processes of marketing, design, service delivery, and service perfomance analysis.

Often these elements can be measured, and if the partners believe in a positive correlation between quality system features and intangible product qualities, then they will agree on including, in the contract, requirements to the quality system.

ISO 9000 lists a number of factors for selecting a model or level of detail for the quality system. Among these are: design complexity and maturity, production process complexity, product characteristics and safety, and economics.

Quality of vocational guidance

Used in a proper way, ISO 9000 certification projects do meet their purpose, whether it is reducing costs, gaining market share etc.

But one should be careful to choose an adequate level of formalization and documentation of quality systems. The idea is still to create quality, not to control (lack of) quality.
There is a number of technics for gaining awareness of and for creating quality, e.g. quality circles, systematic quality reporting, quality games, and different quality control programmes. The idea is to have the optimal mix and interaction between the production factors: people, methods, machines, material, information, environment, and management.

Quality in vocational guidance is the customer's total sensation of doing "business" with the vocational guidance organisation. For the client this includes reception, waiting time, room interior, personal style of the guidance councellor, take-away material, follow up etc. For the public authority it includes access to adequate annual statistics, minimum of complaints, reduction of skills' shortages in the labour market etc.

These are central themes to address in search of quality and quality requirements in service product specifications.

To be or not to be ISO 9000

ISO 9000 is an international standard for describing quality systems. The use of ISO 9000 in

different vocational guidance organisations does not imply that their quality systems, let alone their services, become alike. One vocational guidance organisation may choose to market a low-budget focused service, while another markets a high quality broadly covering service, and yet a third organisation restrains itself to delivering computer based vocational guidance. Yet all of them may be certified by the same auditor after the same ISO standard.

Quality in the eyes of the customers may be obtained by various means. Whether or not an ISO 9000 certification adds to this quality depends on a number of internal and external factors in the specific case.

A market where competing suppliers are certified after the same standards becomes a more transparent market for the customers. Whether this effect and the above mentioned other effects constitute an advantage for an individual supplier or customer is a question requiring thorough analysis.

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Quality improvement and quality assurance in knowledge intensive service organisations

A growing number of organisations are introducing quality control systems, usually in accordance with one of two systems: ISO 9000 or EFQM. What is the applicability of the two systems to a knowledge intensive service organisation (KISO), how can a quality system be introduced and what is the function of a quality audit for continuous quality control?

KISO Knowledge Intensive Service Organisation
EFQM European Foundation of Quality Management

Social, economic and technological developments are forcing organisations to embrace continuous change, be highly flexible and have the capability to innovate their products and services. Greater competition and shrinking markets mean organisations have to stand out from

their rivals. Not surprisingly, therefore, they are seeking ways to improve themselves: 'What can be improved? Are our clients satisfied with the quality of our products? How can we keep our business processes controllable and manageable?' There is a growing awareness that these questions can be answered by introducing a quality improvement programme. The resultant quality system consists of a body of standards and procedures that continuously test the level of services, product quality or client satisfaction.
In the course of time, various methods have been developed to promote the use of quality systems (Hardjono, 1992). Such methods include the quality awards established in Japan (Deming Award, since 1951) and America (Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, since 1987). In Europe, the European Foundation of Quality Management (EFQM) has develop a quality award based on the American model: the European Quality Award (since 1988).

To be eligible for a quality award, an organisation must make a written self-assessment of itself, analysing its entire business processes (including its environment), in accordance with a normative framework. The self-assessment is then checked by external auditors. Apart from these awards, there are also quality systems that record particular processes (production, delivery, accounting, etc.) as elements of a testable procedure. If these procedures are tested and approved by external auditors, the organisation is awarded a certificate. A well-known example of this is the ISO 9000 system, which emphasises the assurances provided by internal procedures and the contractual relationship between supplier and customer.

Knowledge Intensive Service Organisations (KISOs)
This article looks at the development and implementation of a quality system in a knowledge intensive service organisation (KISO) that has specific primary processes. Two quality systems are described and compared with each other (ISO and EFQM) so as to form an opinion on their value to such organisations. The article then sets out a plan of action for the development and implementation of a quality system in a KISO. Since continuous quality control revolves around the measurement of quality, the article closes with a description of how a quality audit is conducted.
On account of their primary processes, KISOs are organisations that supply knowledge intensive services. They include law firms, research centres, consultancies, career offices, employment offices and training centres. Mintzberg (1983, 1989) has typified such organisations as flat organisations that have some administrative support but do not have top-heavy staff services. The shared values are received positively by the workers, or 'professionals' as they are called, and therefore serve as a binding element. The professionals apply their often scarce and highly specialised knowledge to solve their clients' problems.

When operating efficiently, a KISO boasts a number of structural features that put professionals 'at their ease', allowing them to work at their best (Weggeman,1993). Firstly, a KISO has little formal structure. In other words, there are few hierarchies and ranks and little top-down control in the form of strict standards and targets. This 'hands off' approach guarantees the professionals' freedom of operation. Secondly, the professional has direct profit responsibility since the product that is delivered is the outcome of his personal knowledge and experience. As a result, 'quality' is left to the professional. Thirdly, the functional organisation of a KISO often consists of teams made up of professionals drawn from the same discipline. Professionals rarely venture into other disciplines or appropriate adjoining privileges unless it is in the interests of their clients. A final structural feature of an efficient KISO is the existence of a dual ladder structure permitting two separate career paths. On the one path, a junior can grow, for example, into a top specialist, senior professional or senior consultant (functional ladder) and on the other the same junior can progress into a management position (operational ladder).

As a result of their primary processes, KISOs provide an intangible product that is closely related to the know-how, experience and reliability of the professionals who deliver the product. Such professionals tend to have a highly specialised academic background. They enjoy a high social standing, like to work independently and tend to have an antipathy to management control. Their services are often difficult to measure and they feel uncomfortable with procedures, regulations and structures. In effect, they themselves, in consultation with the client, determine which quality standards their product has to satisfy (Weggeman, 1993, Maister, 1992).

That training centres, career offices, employment offices, research centres, etc. share many of the characteristics of a KISO is of fundamental importance to the design and implementation

of quality systems at such organisations. Critical factors are the description of primary processes and the standards set for them, the definition of the quality of the product, the measurement of client satisfaction and, last but not least, the willingness of members of the organisation to change. The quality system should perfectly match the nature of the organisation. Against this background, two quality systems, the ISO 9000 system and the EFQM model, are compared below on their applicability to a KISO.

Comparison of ISO and EFQM

A range of methods is currently available to help KISOs develop quality systems. This section compares two methods/standard systems with each other, namely the ISO 9000 standards, particularly the ISO 9001, and the EFQM model. They are compared as regards their applicability to training centres as KISOs. The EFQM model for training centres is also known as continuous quality improvement, a name given to the method in 'Op weg naar een continue kwaliteitsverbetering' (1993).

In 1987 the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) issued five quality assurance standards, now known as the ISO series or, in the Netherlands, the NEN-ISO series. These standards have an industrial background. In themselves they do not constitute a quality system, rather they describe the general conditions needed for a quality system. The underlying concept is that the standardisation of processes creates a common language and establishes thoroughness and reliability. One of the NEN-ISO standards, number 9001, has been adapted for use by training centres (1994). Training centres seeking quality certification use the ISO standards as a guideline when introducing their quality systems. ISO certification is intended to assure a business (the client) that the training centre (the supplier) provides its services in accordance with pre-set agreements (specifications and standards).

The EFQM model, an initiative of the European Foundation for Quality Management, assesses organisations by means of nine criteria. The model assumes that quality is assessed by the client, that an organisation must be able to respond quickly to client signals, that management is exemplary, that employees can be motivated and that intervention or alterations are based where possible on facts and quantitative data.

The method links the nine criteria applied in the model to five growth stages. Classifying an organisation by its growth stage encourages it to adopt a process of continuous quality improvement. The growth or improvement path runs from stage 1 to stage 5, with each stage building on the previous one. This does not mean that a training centre in stage 1 provides poor training courses, only that it can progress a further four stages, during which the quality of its services will improve. These stages are considered below for a hypothetical training centre.

Stage 1: In the first stage, the training centre is driven primarily by short-term results. The organisation is marked by its ad hoc character and the highly individualistic nature of its quality. There are few procedures, if any, to guarantee the continuity of its services.

Stage 2: In stage 2, the training centre begins to set quality 'standards' for its training courses. Agreements are made within the organisation on the development of the business processes. At a product and service-delivery level, a clear and consistent policy begins to evolve.

Stage 3: In stage 3, the training centre is undertaking demonstrable activities to consolidate and document its experience and know-how and promote their exchange throughout the organisation. The commitment of all members of staff is evident. The organisation is working on the effective and careful control of all internal processes.

Stage 4: A training centre in stage 4 is structurally and manifestly engaged in improving its existing products, services and business processes. Quality awareness centres on the client and a clear and systematic quality policy is emerging based on concrete quality indicators. The organisation collects and evaluates all relevant business information, which it applies for the systematic improvement of its quality in order to safeguard its continuity.

Stage 5: In this stage, the training centre is dedicated to the continuous improvement of its products and services. It is willing to learn from its clients and develops all aspects of its services in close cooperation with them. The external environment is manifest in all the organisation's activities and products and the organisation benchmarks itself against competitors and leading organisations in its market. Quality is recognised as a critical factor and there are visible improvements in the quality of the services.

The EFQM method helps a training centre evaluate itself, after which it can decide whether it should be screened by external specialists (auditors). Since an audit is often seen as a painful operation, this feature of quality improvement is considered in more detail later in this article.

ISO or EFQM?

If the two methods are placed side by side, it can be seen that there are close similarities between the criteria they apply. The EFQM model with its nine criteria, however, covers the entire organisation. The ISO 9000 standard (more specifically here the ISO 9001 standard) concentrates more on the quality policy (policy & organisation), business processes, the control of resources and certain aspects of the personnel policy (resources and procedures). ISO is concerned chiefly with guaranteeing business processes by means of written descriptions of procedures and guidelines. This corresponds to the 'product standards have been set' stage of the EFQM method.

ISO 9001

- Sets minimum standards that have to be met, e.g. a quality manual
- Uses trained auditors
- Provides insight into core processes (demonstrate, make visible)
- Internal commitment from staff is not spontaneous but it is essential
- Emphasis on improving processes by means of measurement, documentation and testing
- Focused on quality assurance
- Focused on core processes
- In the first instance, quality assurance is provided by recording and documenting business processes and by motivated staff
- Staff involvement is essential
- Choice and priority are often dictated by external clients
- High market profile

EFQM

- Sets minimum standards per stage - sets a path for improvement (growth stages)
- Uses trained auditors
- 'Profiles' give insight into areas for improvement
- Internal staff commitment is encouraged
- Emphasis on promoting improvement, with documentable data forming the basis for each subsequent stage
- Focused on continuous improvement
- Focused on the total organisation
- Quality is assured by continuous improvement of the management of the total organisation
- Staff involvement is essential
- Choice and priority are dictated more by strategic reorientation and organisational improvement
- Market profile not yet as high

In the first instance, the ISO 9000 standard can be described as a method to guarantee the quality of an organisation's core processes. The EFQM model is more a diagnostic and growth/development tool. The diagnosis of an organisation lays the foundations for establishing a quality system and starting a process of quality improvement. In practice, the two methods are highly compatible. Following diagnosis (EFQM model), i.e. laying the foundations, a training centre may decide to seek ISO certification to guarantee the quality of its core processes. After being awarded the ISO certificate, the quality improvement process can be continued by using the guidelines of the EFQM.

Both methods enable a quality system to be tailored to the specific needs of an organisation. Training centres that apply the ISO 9000 standard often believe it is too rigid, but even ISO 9001 does not give substantive guidelines to the organisation ' it only gives guidelines on how to describe the processes. As a result, no two quality manuals are exactly the same.

Giving direction to quality improvement

The availability of a method to set up and control a quality system is important. But in practice, the commitment of the staff/professionals is of greater importance to the final result. And in this respect there are marked differences between KISOs and manufacturing organisations. If the purpose of a quality system is the continuous promotion of quality improvement, the process must have the full backing of the directors, and management and staff (the professionals) must be involved from the outset in setting up, developing and implementing the process.

We discussed above how a KISO can introduce a quality system. It can be diagnosed using

the EFQM model and its core processes guaranteed by ISO 9001. The diagnosis often reveals various areas for improvement, including:

- the creation of an operational business plan, including a quality plan and plans of action;
- a reappraisal of how the organisation is run (for example, communication between senior management and business unit managers);
- the creation of a continuing professional education policy;
- the collection and recording of relevant business information;
- the documentation of key business processes;
- the establishment of a management information system;
- the drafting of guidelines on how professionals and support staff are to work together;
- the establishment of guidelines on the delivery of services to clients;
- the establishment of performance and quality measures to support management, for example the degree of client satisfaction, quotation success rates and the lead time for development projects.

Guidelines and procedures can help improve the above areas, to which end the ISO 9000 standard can be applied. But KISOs often say that a coherent framework is required to give direction to the process of quality improvement and thus successfully improve results. Procedures and guidelines alone are not enough.
The nine criteria of the EFQM model provide such a framework. In a modified form, the EFQM model shows the basis for this framework. This framework enables areas for improvement to be identified and helps establish the priorities for quality improvement.

Control
The managers of a KISO control the quality process. It has already been mentioned that management's encouragement and motivation is critical to the success of the quality process. Other critical factors are management style, a clear perception of the quality required, demonstrable personal commitment and the provision of real support.

System
In the first place, 'policy and strategy' are vital components of the quality system. It is particularly important for the quality policy to be worked out into operational and action plans. The more detailed these plans are as regards quality measures and benchmarks, the more effective they are for control purposes. An important starting point is the collection, ordering and analysis of information (much of which is already available) on the internal environment (number of services, number of clients, principles, turnover figures, etc.) and the external environment (market developments, competitors, etc.).

In the second place, organisations often do not have a full understanding of their own business processes. Professionals working individually or in small teams on part of a business process seldom if ever consider the process as a whole. Training centres that map out their business processes seem to benefit greatly. Such process mapping not only makes the business processes understandable to all concerned, but also enables adjustments and improvements to be made. Unnecessary duplications of work or internal regulations are avoided and (perhaps most importantly of all) mutual understanding is improved.

A clear and detailed HR policy contributes to the training centre's effective implementation of business processes. How do we keep the good professionals at the organisation? How do we receive the market information from them that is necessary to control our organisation? How do we keep in touch with the professionals? How do we secure their know-how and experience for the organisation? These issues can be resolved with the aid of appraisal interviews, continuing professional education, the designation of profit centres, rewards for staff who achieve agreed results (performance measurement) and consultative structures. In addition, business processes are supported by effective tools, such as budgets, materials, equipment, software, etc. Clear procedures and guidelines promote the effectiveness of the business process.

Results
But where does all this lead us? It leads to us achieving the objectives set and recorded in the policy document (policy and strategy). Objectives are measured in terms of client satisfaction, staff satisfaction and favourable market image. Lastly, the financial result should not be overlooked, because in the final analysis it guarantees the continuity of the organisation.

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Quality audits

Quality systems such as ISO and EFQM must satisfy the demands made on prevention (the system must prevent errors from being made), process control (the system must cover the entire business process), robustness (the system should work in all conditions) and capacity for continuous quality improvement. With regard to the last requirement, the quality system must promote coordination and cooperation between the various members of staff so that they are motivated to change business processes.
A quality audit establishes whether the quality system satisfy the demands mentioned above. External specialists are often engaged to screen the organisation by themselves or in teams. These are known as 'quality audits by external auditors'. A quality audit can be regarded as a systematic and independent examination to determine whether the activities and their results agree with the established procedures and standards (Kerklaan, 1992). Such audits often cause quite a stir within an organisation. They are perceived as examinations, testing many years' hard work. In addition, organisations feel vulnerable when they are completely open with outsiders.
Quality audits tend to follow a fixed pattern:

Preparatory phase
In this phase, talks are held with management, staff, etc. to inform them of precisely what the audit team will be doing. An extensive study is also made of the documentation on the business organisation, job descriptions, process charts, work regulations, quality control structures, etc. It is also decided who will be interviewed, on what topic, when and where. This phase is often supplemented by a visit to the organisation to be screened. When this phase has been completed, the definitive audit team can be selected.

Implementation phase
In this phase interviews are held and business processes are tested in full or in part by studying quotations, files, course material, etc. The interviews are crucial to the quality of the audit. A good interviewer arrives and leaves on time, introduces himself, describes his position in the audit team and explains the status of the interview. He asks as many open-ended questions as possible, based on strict interview planning, to elicit specific examples. When he asks questions he will appear unbiased and will not be arrogant or supercilious. However, in the event of uncertainty, he will pursue his line of questioning. If necessary, a second appointment will be made. It is vital that the interviewer takes good notes, regularly summarises his findings and separates facts from opinions so that the final report correctly sets out the results of the interview.

Reporting phase
In the reporting phase, the audit team processes the information obtained during the audit into a coherent report. If necessary, a supplementary study will be carried out or additional interviews will be held. The report will contain observations and opinions on the quality system. The core of the report, however, will be a review of areas for improvement which will form the basis for continuous quality improvement. Finally, the audit team's performance during the quality audit will be evaluated by the organisation, complemented where necessary by self-evaluation by the members of the team.

Quality of the audit

The difficulties of carrying out an adequate, reliable and independent audit can be seen from the above description of the audit process. The difficulties are aggravated by the multiplicity of organisations that conduct quality audits, for example Lloyds Register QA, Bureau Veritas Quality International, Kema Registered Quality, Det Norske Veritas Industrie, Cedeo bv, KPMG Certification, Stichting CERTIKED, KIWA and TÜV Nederland. Studies have been made of the performance of audit teams to determine what makes for a good or a bad audit (Onderzoek Kwaliteit in Bedrijf, 1993).

A good audit is characterised by:
- the auditors having knowledge of the industry and the organisation's primary processes;
- close cooperation between the audit team and the organisation being audited;
- auditors who not only check and verify (attest) but also make suggestions for improvement (quality improvement);

- auditors having a thorough knowledge of the standards used in the quality system;
- auditors being client friendly.

A bad audit is characterised by:

- auditors not having enough knowledge of the industry, the organisation's primary processes and the standards used in the quality system;
- changes in the audit team before completion of the audit and/or differences in interpretation among the individuals in the audit team;
- poor internal organisation of the audit team, particularly as regards such administrative aspects as planning, document management and the observance of agreements;
- incorrect behaviour by auditors, e.g. authoritarian, patronising or condescending attitude towards staff, work performance or the organisation as a whole;
- over-bureaucratic and formal, if not pedantic, attitude during the audit when professional judgement is called for;
- reports being too cursory or too detailed and presented late or inadequately.

The audit of a KISO

The audit of a KISO is particularly problematic. The auditors of KISOs should be especially sensitive to the quality aspects of the areas they examine (which are also the criteria used in the EFQM model): leadership & personnel policy, policy and strategy, business processes and client satisfaction. Business processes are played out within these areas and they are particularly critical for the final quality of a KISO's product.

Leadership & personnel policy

The directors and management of KISOs face the challenge of providing leadership within a flat organisation to individualistic professionals who, if truth be known, simply do not like rules and procedures. They must also encourage the professionals to change business processes in order to improve the quality of the product. Many KISOs work with freelance staff (trainers, teachers, advisers, etc.), who require their own guidance, reward and control structures. Finally, management must find solutions that satisfy the career expectations of the professionals, which may be problematic in a flat organisation.

Policy & strategy

Today's KISOs are having to build up or defend their positions in an overcrowded market while their problems are growing more complex. To do so, they must, amongst other things, make a clear choice of which products they supply and the way in which they provide them. To put these strategic choices into practice, staff must be prepared to constantly change their working practices, something that professionals may at times find difficult to accept. Furthermore, KISOs are increasingly having to take decisions on (obligatory) cooperation with other KISOs. In a number of cases there are parent-subsidiary relationships. Alliances based on mergers, acquisitions, joint ventures, etc., however, are successful only if the various professionals are willing to operate in multi-disciplinary teams.

Satisfied clients

The degree of client satisfaction is often taken as an important measure of the quality of a training centre's product (Maister, 1992). Auditors must be particularly sensitive to client satisfaction. The business can ask itself: Have client expectations been met? Does the organisation really understand those expectations? Does the organisation regularly collect information on clients? Is their any account management? Are there clear agreements set out in contracts and delivery conditions on the services provided? Are their clear performance standards or landmark products that allow criticism? Does the centre regularly measure client satisfaction, etc.?

A quality audit makes an important contribution to the successful application of a quality system. Close cooperation between the KISO and the auditors (who are themselves professionals) is essential.

Quality assurance or quality improvement?

This article has compared two methods that can contribute to the introduction of a quality system. The ISO 9000 standard is targeted more at quality assurance; the EFQM model more

at the initiation of a quality improvement process. A KISO can apply a combination of the to methods.
If quality improvement is to have a visible result in a KISO, the process must be controlled. An initial diagnosis using the EFQM model may be beneficial. The ISO 9000 standards can help guarantee the quality of processes. But if quality improvement is to mean more than just certification, it is necessary to work within a framework or conceptual model. The EFQM can serve as a conceptual model to direct quality improvement in a KISO. Priorities are revealed and areas for improvement are mapped out. In both systems, the performance of adequate quality audits by external auditors enables the organisation to work continuously on improving the quality of its business processes and services.

The goal of certification for certification's sake does not lead to true quality improvement. Quality improvement is meaningful only where the internal organisation (management, professionals and other staff) are committed and fully subscribe to the goal of quality improvement. Professional organisations that set themselves the goal of providing their clients with the greatest possible added value and that are also able to mobilise the internal organisation to that end are ultimately working on the improvement of their total performance.

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Quality management and ISO standards in the PMS centres for community education in Flanders

In 1989, following consultation with various individuals responsible for policy, the PMS Training Centre initiated the implementation of a Delphi - Stratman study, relating to the new public image of PMS centres. One important question was: "How can we guarantee qualitative innovation in PMS centres, now and in the long term?" This was the starting point for the discussion on quality. The term "quality" is an exceedingly subjective term. It is difficult to precisely describe "quality", since it relates to an evaluation of "reality". We tend to deal with these subjective evaluations as concrete, measurable facts, irrespective of the observer. The same approach is employed for such terms as "time" and "space" (Dr. ir. A.B. Cramwinckel).

Quality means the allocation of certain characteristics to products and/or services. We perceive these characteristics via our senses (either directly or by means of instruments). Everybody observes the same reality differently.

We must also be on our guard against speaking too freely of the word "quality". By simply reading a great deal about it, talking about it, visiting conferences and other meetings on quality, we rapidly have the feeling that we are doing a great deal. But in this field, the transition from theory to practice is far from simple. Working in the field of quality is a very rewarding process, but it does call for considerable patience and diplomacy. Perhaps here, once again, the comparison with time and space could be useful. Just think how difficult it is to teach people to use their time wisely. And how difficult it is for national and municipal authorities to allocate the space available to them in a way friendly to both man and the environment.

We believe that it is useful to keep these points at the back of our mind, if we are to avoid becoming disenchanted. But we are definitely opposed to the attitude of welfare workers and advisors, who suggest that the result (the output) of their work is totally unmeasurable. Work is a process which always leads to added value. It is sometimes difficult to determine this added value, but not impossible. We therefore went in search of systems which could provide an answer (albeit not 100% exact answer) to the following questions:

"What do we need to do good work?" (What input?)
"What is the result of our work?" (What output?)
"How do we know whether the result of a particular task is good?" (Measurement, evaluation)
"How can we ensure that similar activities always are implemented at least as well, and preferably better each time?" (Quality assurance)

The ISO 9000 standards and Total Quality Management (TQM) provide possibilities for searching for answers to these questions. In the next two paragraphs, we will explain our experiences with both TQM and the ISO standards.

Total Quality Management (TQM)

In the nineteen eighties, TQM made the transition from industry to service industry. Following some adjustment, the majority of techniques proved equally applicable in the service sector, as in production.

Definition

Quality management is the totality of activities consciously undertaken by an organisation, in respect of quality.

Quality management in an organisation becomes total, if all sections of that organisation operate with a view to achieving quality.

Quality management has evolved from a technique for managing production processes, into a system for improving organisations. The objective now is to improve the functioning of the total organisation. Quality management has become a management tool according to which every function in an organisation is questioned, including the management itself. The fundamental idea behind this expanded definition is that if the entire organisation functions correctly, its products and/or services will therefore automatically also be of a good quality. This statement explains the importance of complying with one of the ISO system standards, as a basis for guaranteeing the quality of the basic processes in an organisation.

Objectives

Maintaining the dynamic nature of the new PMS image by:

- Adjusting the PMS objectives and procedures to match the needs evolved, via a system known to all parties involved;
- regularly implementing market research;
- establishing quality improvement teams;
- listing and analysing problems in the functioning of the PMS centres.

Activities

Below is a summary of the various activities of the Training Centre in the framework of TQM, in respect of PMS centres. Any practical tools are listed in the appendix.

Establishing a TQM steering committee

The objective of the TQM steering committee was to facilitate the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) in the PMS centres, and to list and solve the problems. In an ideal situation, a steering committee of this type would consist primarily of senior management, but the idea of introducing TQM emerged from middle management (Training Centre). The entire strategy was therefore supervised from that centre. One person at the Training Centre was made responsible for coordinating all quality activities. This person, in conjunction with the management and a working group leader, is currently involved in taking all initiatives relating to TQM, and presents all plans to the parties involved.

Informing the management groups and inspectorates of the PMS centres about TQM
All management groups were informed about the objectives and philosophy behind TQM, via regional meetings. The inspectorates were also informed. The aim was to inform everyone in the PMS sector about TQM, so that in the long term, every employee would come to understand and eventually employ the TQM philosophy. We also hoped to obtain the cooperation of the management groups, with a view to improving the operation of the PMS centres, and to permit the PMS staff to carry out quality campaigns. The reactions received were positive, although there were certain doubts, since the initiative behind TQM had not come from the senior managers, but from the middle management.

Informing the PMS staff
The PMS staff were informed about TQM during information days relating to the new PMS image, and during the special days at which the results of the "ATLAS" quality circle were presented. The objectives of this process were identical to those of approaching the management groups.
37% of the participants expressed an interest in further training. 37% of the participants also expressed an interest in participating in a quality circle.

Training the PMS management groups
30% of the management groups were trained in Total Quality Management, with the objective of learning to efficiently implement TQM. 15% of the management groups took part in a working group on the local implementation of TQM in the PMS centres. The evaluations were positive. However, practice has now shown that the majority of management groups did little, in the field of TQM.

ATLAS, a quality circle for Social Workers
8 social workers followed the 10-stage quality improvement process, with a view to establishing a procedure for screening underprivileged toddlers. The result was presented to the management and the centre's social workers (a number of consultants in teaching psychology and a number of paramedic employees were also present). 50% of the PMS centres were reached. The presentation to the management led to a number of agreements. 80% of the participants in this study day were to implement the screening system according to the procedure developed, with a view to subsequent evaluation and, as necessary, adjustment. This evaluation is to be carried out at the end of the school year 1994-95.

Training on "Total Quality Management in the PMS centre"
Every year, the Training Centre organises and introduction day and a 3-day training course in TQM, for PMS personnel. The introduction above all concentrates on training in techniques. The theoretical section occupies only 20% of the time. The evaluations are positive: the techniques learned are considered unanimously, by all participants, as useful and the majority of participants wish to learn more about TQM. The introduction and training are repeated annually, for any new people showing an interest. We are also considering follow-up sessions for those employees who have already completed the training. We have, after all, noted that despite the positive evaluations, it is still extremely difficult to employ TQM in practice. The causes of this difficulty, which have been put forward, relate to:

- the difficulty of convincing colleagues to employ new methods, because the persons in question do not believe they have sufficient persuasive skills, because they are receiving criticism of TQM from their colleagues, or because they are unable to successfully explain the actual content of TQM;
- not yet being fully conversant with these techniques learned: for the majority of PMS staff, actually applying new techniques in their work calls for a considerable amount of practice;
- short-term thinking in respect of time management: there is "not sufficient time" at the moment, without any thought for future time gains.

General evaluation and further plans
Following the information and training days, all evaluations were positive. However, we have noted that in practice, implementation is proving difficult. We at the Training Centre are still providing further after-care, and where necessary coaching for those employees who have already been trained in TQM.

We have the feeling that we have worked and practised a great deal with fictitious situations, but the result in practice has remained limited.

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On the other hand, the "screening 3 toddler" procedure, drawn up within a quality circle, was a success. The development of clear procedures and work instructions, which at the design stage take account of quality requirements, seems to meet a need on the part of the personnel. When the "screening 3 toddler" procedure was developed, there was no draft quality system for PMS centres, according to ISO standards. There is therefore a risk that following implementation over a period of time, the procedure will not be adhered to as strictly as in the beginning. In the very near future, this procedure will be updated, according to the framework developed in respect of so-called "scenarios". Subsequently, the procedure will be updated, for a second time.

Through experience, and via contacts with the ISO/TQM consultant, we noted that TQM offers no strategy for implementing, guaranteeing and managing a system. TQM does offer means for improving basic processes, but it offers not long-term guarantees. This may be one of the reasons why via TQM, we did not immediately achieve the desired results.

However, training PMS employees in TQM remains worthwhile, since it permits them to work on procedures, in an efficient manner. For example, in order to be able to determine the quality criteria of a given output, it is first necessary to know exactly what "quality" means. A further objective is to ensure that in the long term, everyone within the organisation speaks the same language when it comes to quality, and has the resources necessary for providing quality. In order to contribute to quality improvement projects and problem solution teams, it is necessary to have an understanding of the step-by-step plans and techniques involved (see appendix).

ISO standards

History

It was not until the nineteen nineties that in the service sector, too, people started to employ the ISO 9000 series of standards as a guideline for quality management of an organisation. This explains why we started implementing TQM a number of years ago, and why we did not introduce ISO standards directly.
The ISO standards offer a system which clearly outlines requirements to be met. One important aspect of ISO standards is the availability of procedures and work instructions. The ISO 9001 standard provides a framework for introducing the "scenario" system, with guaranteed high quality.

Definition

ISO standards are product and system standards, issued by the ISO, the International Organisation for Standardisation, based in Geneva. The countries of the EU are affiliated to this organisation.

In order to optimise the functioning of organisations (of whatever type), standards have been developed for the management of an organisation. These are the ISO 9001 to 9003 series of standards. ISO 9001 provides the most complete picture.

But what do the requirements of the ISO 9001 standard mean, in concrete terms? Below is a short summary of the requirements for implementing a quality policy, according to the 9001 standard.

The objectives of the organisation have been determined. The policy is recognisable. Tasks, responsibilities and authorities of each employee are described. Procedures (scenarios) are in place. All processes are described and are evaluated. Negotiations have been carried out with the clients, in respect of the activities programme. The procedure for establishing new methods and work approaches is laid down. Agreements are in place concerning the management of forms: what forms are there, which do we intend to keep, how are forms drawn up, and how are they altered ... A procedure has been laid down for guaranteeing the quality of products and services purchased from outside. Requirements are determined which must be met by the products or services to be provided by the client, to permit the organisation to carry out good work (e.g. class councils, use of teaching periods, ...). Products and services are identified, so that they can be retraced (e.g. MW1/II27/09/94). A procedure has been determined for dealing with products and services with defects, for dealing with complaints, and

for introducing corrective and preventive measures. Information on the quality of services and products is recorded. An evaluation procedure has been established, which looks at the efficiency of the system, and staff training and experience overviews have been drawn up. The method of providing after-care in respect of services provided is laid down. The statistical techniques employed within the organisation are described.

If the scenarios are worked out, as described, 80% of the requirements of ISO 9001 are already met.

Objectives
For the PMS centres, the objective of using ISO standards is not so much obtaining certification, as optimising the operation of the organisation.

Originally, the objective of introducing ISO 9001 into PMS centres was to provide a system for drawing up the scenario system aimed at quality. The effect of developing and implementing procedures is considerably greater than the effect of training. As a result, we believe that the drawing up of procedures, in which the use of quality-promoting techniques and principles is integrated, and listing quality criteria, is an efficient means of promoting quality at PMS centres, on a large scale, in both the short and longer term.

We noted that working out scenarios, if done according to the ISO 9001 standard, will lead to the implementation of the new PMS image. After all, via the scenarios, the objectives contained in the new image are converted into physical plans of action and activities.

Objective of ISO 9001: Implement the new PMS image
- to inform those involved of the objectives contained in the new PMS image;
- to convert these objectives into procedures which meet the quality requirements;
- to analyse all PMS processes, and assure their manageability, through the introduction of evaluation techniques;
- to draw up a quality manual.

Activities
The practical tools are listed in the appendix.

Study day and working group on ISO standards
A study day on the ISO 9000 series of standards for the PMS management groups led to the establishment of a working group which translated the ISO 9001 standard, for the PMS centres. The document drawn up by this working group will serve as a tool when drawing up the practical scenarios.

Presenting the image of the various PMS disciplines
Once a general PMS image text had been prepared, the organisation of focus groups represented the first step in presenting the individual character of the various PMS disciplines. These focus groups collected a great deal of information about the operation of their own discipline, according to various brainstorming methods.
On the basis of this collation process, the next step was for the working groups to lay down the outlines (in the broadest terms) of the actual tasks of the various disciplines.

Provision of information to PMS staff
During a study day related to the new PMS image, the results were presented by the working groups which had been responsible for characterising the various disciplines.
The PMS staff were also provided with information about the scenario system which was to be developed, in which the advantages of this system in their working situation were emphasized.

Scenarios for the operation of PMS centres
Scenarios for the PMS centres were developed, on the basis of the following facts: the need expressed by the PMS staff for clear work instructions and information from the management, the expression of this need in the Stratman study, and the requirements which must be met by an organisation, which aims to ensure quality.
On the one hand, the purpose of the scenarios is to provide permanent information about policy options, policy structures, and organisational aspects, and on the other hand to provide the PMS staff with manuals, to support them in their work.

In order to ensure that the scenarios remain useful for the employees, it is vital that a system also be set up which guarantees currency and updating, distribution to the parties involved, and involvement. The Training Centre has already completed proposals for how such a system can be implemented. The active involvement of the PMS staff in preparing the scenarios is highly desirable; for each discipline, a working group and a number of ad hoc employees will be appointed. The working group will work out the concrete details of the system, will list the tasks and activities to be restricted within their respective disciplines, will search for experts for the various tasks and activities, will establish an expert system, will supervise the ad hoc employees in writing out the texts for the scenarios, will edit and regularly update the texts, and will systematically determine needs. The Teaching Advisors will be able to carry out a systematic evaluation of the content, and issue recommendations for corrections.

The system will result in the following 4 main sections: a general section (objectives, work areas, priorities, target groups, organisation chart, etc. for the PMS centres), a description of the various disciplines (specific tasks, activities, methods, modalities for cooperation with the other disciplines), a description of the working methods classified according to the 4 supervision areas (according to a fixed framework), and a local section (local information: priorities, organisation chart, task descriptions by name, distribution of working areas, etc.).

When preparing the scenarios (= procedures and work instructions), the requirements for the ISO 9001 standard will be respected.

General evaluation and further plans

The first reflex reaction of the staff members to the theoretical concept of "ISO standards", is one of indifference, confusion, misunderstanding and resistance. However, the concrete application of these standards leads to enthusiasm. The majority of PMS staff are very enthusiastic about the idea of having access to scenarios, in the future; it will no longer be necessary to, as it were, "reinvent the wheel", every time, and the scenarios will represent a useful tool for introducing new members of staff to the work. A number of members of staff have expressed a fear that the scenarios will rob them of all freedom in their work. But this fear is premature, since the idea of the scenarios is in no way to limit creativity and initiative-taking. At all times, it will be possible to make proposals to the persons responsible for the scenarios, on the basis of evaluation data. Creativity and communication can be promoted, so that an idea from a single employee can be passed on to all of the others. On the other hand, it is clear that no organisation claiming to offer quality can permit its staff to work with 100% freedom.

If the scenarios are drawn up according to plan, 80% of the requirements of the ISO 9001 standard will already have been met. If we then wish to further optimise our policy, it will be possible, via checklists (audits based on ISO 9001), to identify those requirements not yet met. This information can then be passed on to the management, for further decision making.

Start with TQM or ISO standards?

In literature, there are opposing views on the question as to whether it is better to first introduce TQM, or to start with ISO.

Arguments in favour of starting with TQM	Arguments in favour of starting with ISO
- having fulfilled the ISO standards, people have no further interest in also working at quality improvement - staff involvement with ISO is not as great - cost savings, improvements in the market position, increased customer-satisfaction ... all have greater effects on the objectives of the organisation, than a certified quality assurance system - viewing ISO certification as an objective in itself engenders the risk that subsequently, little will be done to improve quality - increased bureaucracy with ISO	- working according to an ISO 9000 standard brings with it numerous improvements. These represent a sound basis for further quality expansion - internal processes are first laid down, thus generating clarity - the perception of the organisation by the staff becomes more positive, and the management becomes a role model, through first structuring the organisation - positive evaluation of the organisation by clients: complaints are acted upon, and the organisation becomes more service-oriented than in the past - the ISO system is a starting point for improvement - ISO stops the quality improvement cycle from going into reverse - the risk of becoming bogged down in minor detail is reduced, as long as a clear overview is maintained of the entire process

And what of our own vision?

It is relatively simple to start complying with the requirements of an ISO standard: there are fairly clear guidelines about what has to be done. Implementing TQM is a different matter; first you have to discover the quality objectives, quality standards, and work out step-by-step plans ... all the while there is no understanding of the processes in the organisation.

Looked at logically, it is preferable to start with ISO: the ISO standards offer a system and a framework within which every quality improvement can be given a place. If improvements are introduced, but their implementation is not guaranteed in a procedural system, the results are lost after a period of time. And if one fails to regularly evaluate and adjust the output of a process, the quality of the output is reduced. ISO offers the further advantage that regular evaluation and adjustment of processes is an integral part of the system.

It is extremely important to have the employees themselves work on establishing the ISO system, for a number of reasons; the person carrying out a process has the best understanding of its development, and of any bottlenecks and improvements; participation also improves the level of involvement in the entire quality process. We have learned from experience that during the description of working procedures, numerous improvements are automatically introduced. And making further demands on the staff following the introduction of an ISO system should represent no problem, if the staff are permanently involved in the quality process, and see the advantages of the process both for themselves and for the clients.

CONCLUSION

We believe that it is a task of carers in society to attempt to improve the quality of life of their clients, irrespective of the sector in which they operate. We wish to make a contribution to this process, by optimising the operation of the PMS centres. In other words, for us, working with ISO standards and TQM strategies is a great challenge, aiming towards this objective.

Thus far, however, our activities with TQM and ISO have been focused on the extremities of the organisation; the ground has been prepared, but ... With the exception of the "screening 3 toddler" procedure, the basic processes themselves have not yet been analysed according to ISO and/or TQM. For the time being, we have concentrated on preparing the scenarios.

And yet for us, the challenge lies precisely in analysing, evaluating and altering the course of processes of this type. After all, analysing care organisations and their processes in the framework of quality is still very much pioneering work.

For us, determining the correct detail level for the process analyses would appear to be extremely important: not too general, but not too detailed. The knowledge acquired by members of staff during training, or through experience, and which after time has often become subconscious knowledge, is reawakened and analysed, as a function of quality.

In this way, the same processes can be relatively simply acquired by new staff, and can be permanently evaluated and updated.

Lisbeth Højdal
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Quality management in a Danish Technical College

The present situation in Denmark

Due to an educational reform, the system of vocational education was changed on January 1st 1991. The reform caused comprehensive changes in the way the colleges are run and how the courses are planned. Authority was moved from the central level (Ministry of Education and central organisations) to a local level (local trade committees), and a great deal of the economic authority was moved to the college managements.
At the same time the choice of college was made free, so that students could choose for themselves. This was seen (by the school managers) as a factor that could increase competition among the colleges in the region and was (by others) used as an explanation to start working with quality management systems.
Two Danish vocational colleges are working according to the ISO 9000 system. These are Esbjerg Tekniske Skole, which has been certified in the section that deals with the training of welders and Hillerod Tekniske Centralskole (HTC) which has implemented the ISO 9001 system in the field of adult continuing education. HTC is at the moment in the middle of the process of certifying all areas at the college (including all the vocational education courses offered at the school and the guidance and counselling services).
In addition to this, 4 Labour Market Vocational Training Centres and one local employment agency in Denmark have been certified.

Hillerod Tekniske Centralskole

HTC is a technical college with approximately 1600 students and 300 teachers. A large number of courses are offered at the college, ranging from metalwork to building and construction, and cater to vocational education at upper secondary level. The key activities of the college are in the area of initial vocational training. The school started in 1990 with courses on 'quality thinking' (by Time Manager International) and set out in 1992 on the ISO route.

All employees at HTC were introduced to quality thinking with a range of courses arranged

by Time Manager International (TMI Quality). The school management wanted, with this initiative to create awareness of quality thinking and: "to start a process in which the employee actively becomes engaged in working with quality system as a tool."
The TMI motto is: "Quality pays off", because the companies that work with quality-management make more money by making less mistakes (increase efficiency).
The TMI-system is a quality system based on the concepts of human resource theories. The system is created in order to make individuals aware of their own state of efficiency (quality) and to develop the human resources. The courses introduced the TMI-concept, which deals with the so called P-and I-levels (Present and Ideal). The whole idea is, through changes in attitudes and work procedures, to make the employees reach their ideal level.

The staff at HTC greeted these courses with mixed emotions, and the exercises presented caused many discussions. The exercises contained many questions one simply could not fail to answer correctly, and because of this many started to believe that the whole idea was, on the whole, somewhat naively thought out.

ISO 9001

In 1992 the management at HTC then initiated the implementation of the ISO 9001 certificate, which is an all-round quality system (individuals, buildings, products etc.). All employees participated in a string of courses which introduced the ISO system and a new plan of organisation. Appointed members of staff attended a longer course to achieve competence as internal auditors. In order to meet demands in the ISO system the college management was reorganised. A quality manager was engaged and personnel responsible for quality in a given area were appointed in each department of the college.
As a pilot project the department of mechanical engineering was certified, and at the same time work groups were put together in the other areas of the college. Each single area (the administration, the caretaker etc.) was asked to write procedures for every thinkable situation (work assignment, service or function). These descriptions form together the contents of the quality manual.

The ISO system consists of several gradings, the most extensive being the ISO 9001: "For use when conformity to specified requirements is to be assured by the supplier during several stages which may include design/development, production, installation and servicing." Quality is characterised as: "The characteristics of a product or service - as a whole - and which has something to do with the ability to meet specified requirements".
The ISO courses extend this definition in the following way. Quality is not art or culture or something expensive. But quality is a product or service, which is without defects; compatible with the supplier's specifications and promises to the customer; with less potential trouble. It is essential to understand that quality in ISO terminology does not tell us anything about the actual quality of products or services. The acquisition of an ISO certificate does not automatically change or improve the products or services of the company. The certificate only indicates the company has documented that they produce according to specifications. Companies which produce bad quality goods can very well achieve an ISO certificate!

The ISO Quality Management System

The quality management system requires that the management of the supplier (company or school) defines and documents its policy and objectives (strategy), partly through practical use of the quality system which implicates resources (personnel, equipment etc.) and partly through the structure of the organisation. Implementing the ISO Quality Management System involves a series of organizational changes and a comprehensive documentation, investigation and control.

The quality management process consists of the following steps:

Step 1 Preparation of quality manuals (procedures and instructions)
Step 2 Implementation as described in the quality manual
Step 3 Control by internal audits
Step 4 Reports of ideas of improvement and deviation
Step 5 Corrective actions

Step 1 Preparation of quality manuals/procedures and instructions
All the company's products, services, functions, work assignments, responsibilities and authorities must be described in a quality manual that consists of procedures (who is doing what and when) and instructions (how is it done).
The ISO system requires that the definition of responsibility, authority and the interrelation of all personnel who manage, perform and verify work affecting quality is defined; particulary for personnel who need the organisational freedom and authority to:

- initiate actions to prevent the occurrence of product non-conformity
- identify and record any product quality problems
- initiate, recommend or provide solutions through designated channels
- verify the implementation of solution
- control further processing, delivery or installation of non-conforming products until the deficiency has been corrected.

These work processes are carried out and/or controlled by the quality manager or the person in charge of the quality system in the specific department. Procedures and instructions are described in small work groups with representatives from the departments involved in the specific work service. Procedures and instructions are kept in the quality manual.

Step 2 Implementation as described in the quality manual/performance
The specific work assignments, functions or services are expected to be carried out according to procedures and instructions described in the quality manual. All employees must be committed to registering deviations and to come up with ideas of improvement.

Step 3 Control by internal audits
"The supplier shall carry out a comprehensive system of planned and documented internal quality audits to verify whether quality activities comply with planned arrangements and to determine the effectiveness of the quality system." Audits shall be scheduled on the basis of the status and importance of the activity. The audits and follow-up actions shall be carried out according to documented procedures. The result of the audits shall be documented and brought to the attention of all personnel having responsibility in the area audited. The management personnel responsible for the area shall take timely corrective action on the deficiencies found by the audit.

Step 4 Reports of ideas of improvement and deviation
"The supplier shall establish and maintain procedures to ensure that the product which does not conform to specified requirements, is prevented from inadvertent use or installation. Control shall provide identification, documentation, evaluation, segregation (when practical), disposition of non-conforming products and for notification to the functions concerned." In practice, all ideas of improvement or deviations from specified procedures and instructions are registered in the idea and deviation-reports. The idea and deviation reports are given to the quality manager in the specific area. The area quality manager, in cooperation with the person who has written the report, suggests proposals for corrective actions. The quality manager initiates corrective actions.

Step 5 Corrective actions
The supplier shall establish, document and maintain procedures for:

- investigating the cause of non-conforming product and corrective action needed to prevent recurrence
- analyzing all processes, work operations, concessions, quality records, service reports and customer complaints to detect and eliminate potential causes of non-conforming product
- initiating preventative actions to deal with problems to a level corresponding to the risks encountered
- applying controls to ensure that corrective actions are taken and that they are effective;
- implementation and recording changes in procedures resulting from corrective action.

On the basis of the reports of ideas of improvement and deviation, the quality manager initiates corrective action (the error is corrected) and changes procedures and instructions, to prevent new errors arising. Follow up on the deviations are carried out through internal audits.

Certification

The final certification takes place when the quality management system is tested and documented at internal audits. Certification is performed by an accredited consulting company. Danish Standard (DS) is one of 5 Danish accredited companies.
The certification consists of external audits, with consultants from the certifying company participating. All areas of the college are audited, and the certificate is only achieved when it has been documented that the system works as described in the quality manuals (all employees must know and follow the specified procedures and instructions). To maintain the ISO 9001 certificate, you have to evaluate (audit) the whole system every third year, and let external auditors make spot checks on the system by auditing randomly selected areas every 6 months.

Criticism

The above description of the ISO system covers only some of the demands which must be met in order to be certified. The system is based on the idea of thoroughly described products and services and on improving efficiency through control and prevention of mistakes. It is also based on a supplier/customer/product concept which makes it difficult for me as a guidance counsellor to identify with.

Who is the customer?
It is difficult to define only one 'customer' seen in relation to educational and vocational guidance. Guidance counselling and the goals and objectives of the counsellor's efforts, are defined in the law of educational and vocational guidance. The guidance counsellor's function, according to this, is not only to give service to the client/student but also to serve the interest of the trades and industries and society as a whole. Therefore, there is not just one well defined 'customer' in guidance counselling; the colleges, trades and industries and society all express expectations to and interests in guidance counselling. But who is the guidance counsellor's 'customer'; who is the main objective? Agreement on this issue is of vital importance if it is going to make any sense to work with joint quality standards in educational and vocational guidance.

What is the demand of the customer?
It is very difficult to specify the customer's demands concerning guidance, and it is even more difficult to evaluate. The ISO system is based on the possibility of describing the demands and the expectations of the customer. But is it possible to do that in guidance counselling?
In my opinion the problems that the clients/students have and their expectations and demands in their meeting with the counsellor differs from one individual to another. And as a result of that the counsellor's 'customers' will always evaluate the counsellor's efforts differently.

Conclusion

From a critical perspective, I don't see the ISO system as a relevant tool in quality development in educational and vocational guidance system. In my experience with implementation of the ISO system it has only proved to be:

a top down management tool
very expensive
very time-consuming
extremely bureaucratic
based on control rather than trust
good for products and services fit for evaluation/ measurement only

Elements in educational and vocational guidance which can be evaluated (for example physical surroundings) can not by themselves ensure quality in guidance counselling. Personally I find that the problems that occur in the counsellor's face-to-face confrontation with the student are more rewarding to study.

I think we have to learn to accept that not everything in life can be measured, evaluated and controlled. And that most issues concerning quality in educational and vocational guidance are extremely difficult to fit into work sheets and schedules.

Although almost 2000 years have passed since Cajus Petronius, who was a civil servant under the Roman Emperor Nero, wrote his book Satirae, his words are still suggestive: "We worked hard, but whenever everything seemed to function, new plans for reorganisation were introduced. Later in life I learned that we tend to meet every new situation by reorganisation, and I also realized what a wonderful method this is to create an illusion of progress, while it in fact often causes chaos, inefficiency and demoralisation."

Frank Witkamp
Frank Witkamp is the unit leader of the Information-Advice Team of the Employment Office Alkmaar (NL).

The Employment Office and ISO-certification

The Employment Office Alkmaar has recently received an official ISO Quality Certificate, after a preparatory period of a year. Strictly speaking this period really took a number of years, only at that time we were not aiming to develop a quality care system with ISO-certification, but on improving our organization. On January 16th, 1995 the certificate was presented to us by the Bureau Veritas Quality International, after an official audit in which our Quality Management System (QMS) proved to be in accordance with the requirements as stated in ISO-9002. Since then the system is officially in operation and will have to prove its benefits.

The QMS is a system of: guarantee of competence, quality control of procedures and implementation of the latter in the organisation. For us it's a system in which quality is seen as a dynamic process, in which awareness and control eventually form a natural continuous process of quality improvement. Acquiring such a certificate is not unique, but occurs proportionally less in service organisations (such as employment offices). In the Netherlands the employment office Alkmaar is the first employment office with an ISO Quality Management Certificate. Other employment offices will follow in the coming years.

Organisation

Since 1991 the federation of employers' associations, the federation of trade unions, and the Government are jointly responsible for policy making, each having three seats on the Central Employment Board (CBA), as well as on each of the 28 Regional Employment Boards (RBA). The regional members of the latter are appointed through the CBA. Both boards have an independent chairman and a tenth member with no voting rights. In case of the CBA this member is a representative from the Union of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG). The tenth member of the RBA is a representative of the county council. Each RBA has a regional office, a number of employment offices (arbeidsbureaus) and one or more Vocational Training Centres. The Employment Office Alkmaar is the largest office within the district of the RBA Holland North, in which district another 9 employment offices and one Vocational Training Centre is situated. There are three employment teams and some supporting staff. The members of staff totals 42, of which 70% is female. Many employees work part-time.

Services

The principle forms of service provided by the employment office, are: information and advice, registration, immediate placement and routing. They can be briefly described as follows:

Information Centre (IC)
The reception. This is the most important point of contact for the visitors. In 1994 48,000 visitors were referred to other members of staff or elsewhere on the basis of the nature of their query. Most clients are job-seekers. (Employers mainly come into contact with the employment office via company visits and telephone conversations with placement counsellors.) At the reception clients are also confronted with the new rules on identification which became effective in 1994.
The Job Centre. Vacancies are offered and clients are informed about the required qualifications. If the client can comply with these terms, the employer's address will be supplied.
Videotex. A vacancy database for job-seekers, which generally works in a similar way.
Information. Freely available information on training, education and professions and on all kinds of labour market-related topics.
Counsellors. Information and Advice counsellors who are available without an appointment. These counsellors are specialized in giving information and advice on the labour market in general, as well as giving information, guidance and advice in choosing a profession or training course. This service is offered to the public free of charge, as well as to our fellow employment officers as a way of conveying expertise. Some of the team members are fully-qualified careers guidance advisers. In the last few years the deeper investigation and exploration with the help of test material has been put out on contract-basis for technical-financial reasons.

Registration
The registration area is in the Information Centre. Here is a semi-closed area where the first (registration/) placement interview takes place and the job-seeker is made aware of the possibilities the employment office can offer. The Employment Service makes use of a Primary General Information System (PGI), which roughly consists of a job-seeker's database, an employer's database and a vacancy database. All information which is gathered by the different contacts is recorded in this system.

Job matching
Job matching by means of PGI takes place and eligible candidates for a vacancy are invited to attend an interview with a counsellor in which requirements, motivation and suitability are discussed. The employment counsellors maintain contact with employers by means of company visits. The communication with the job-seekers is supported by a free and widely distributed monthly vacancy- and newspaper. For employers we have a monthly national magazine with a regional section. The registration at the employment bureau is valid for a period of 3 months and can be prolonged after completing and returning a questionnaire, which is sent to every client a few days before the expiry of the registration. With this information client-data is updated.

Routing
Routing is offered to long-term unemployed clients who are eager and ready to work on improving their situation. It consists of a phased method of planned approach, in which a job-seeker is conducted by a counsellor to eventually find a job on the labour market.

The stage before the ISO-route

The Employment Office Alkmaar has been working on quality improvement for years now. A couple of years ago a start was made with improvement projects, ('Wekker projekten') which were based on a strictly regulated approach to bottlenecks in the organization. We started with a couple of pilot projects, in which a group of staff received the assignment to deliver improvement proposals for a certain bottleneck, after tackling the problem in a systematic and uniform way (the SMART-principle). Before these groups started, some of the staff, among them the unit leaders, were trained in practicing the system. In this first phase we made use of outside consultants. Together with a delegation of the higher management, they formed a consultancy group which took care of defining the procedures and creating the conditions necessary. Special care was taken to involve the whole organisation by means of feed-

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back and interaction between the project groups and the teams. After reporting to the consultancy group the proposed improvements were accorded and implemented in the organization.
Characteristic for this approach is the:
- clear-cut task definition
- limited timespace
- survey of the situation
- taking stock and clustering of bottlenecks
- drawing up of measurement programmes
- measurement and analysis of the results
- fine tuning of measurement programmes
- feedback to the staff teams
- formulation of proposals for actions to be taken
- implementation of improved procedures after approval.

If necessary such a cycle will be repeated on individual components before approval is obtained.

Why did we opt for the ISO-system?

The quality projects had a very important function. They proved that combined efforts in a strictly regulated approach could lead to quality improvement. The method also had its restriction. In our opinion it lacked the binding drive which is necessary to keep the process of quality improvement moving. The reason the ISO-system appealed to us is that it is an overall system and that it works a bit as a catalyst: it helps keep the process going. For us it was the next logical step.
Of course there are other systems but we had the opportunity to get acquainted with this system because of a training project we were setting up for unemployed people.

Some arguments in favour of the ISO-system.
The ISO-system:
- offers a useful overall tool of management
- is very recognisable for our clients, especially our (industrial) client employers.
- heightens the self-confidence of the staff
- increases its quality consciousness
- inspires the confidence of our clients (some of our competitors use it for the same reasons).

How the system was set up and is kept in working order

First of all a quality group of five people was set up in which the most enthusiastic staff members with 'empowerment' capabilities were appointed. Care was taken that the members of this task force were experts in their different fields, and that all fields were covered. Two extra members were added from the RBA staff section Management and Research, of which one was trained as an internal auditor. The other was appointed as an independent quality guardian of services offered by the Employment Office Alkmaar. This member had a more peripheral task and only occasionally attended the quality group meetings. The Managing Director has had (and still has) an important role in this group. As the management representative he not only proved to be the pace-maker, he also wrote the more general part of our Quality System Handbook, by strictly following and 'translating' the ISO-9004 guidelines into terms which are commonly used in our organization. The other team members were assigned to work out flow-charts and procedures on all primary and secondary services. All results were carefully scrutinized by the team members. Sometimes a procedure had to be fine-tuned and improved, but thanks to the previous quality projects this proved to be an exception. On the whole little or no changes had to be made in work procedures.

The total quality system is set out in detail in the Quality System Handbook, of which numbered copies are within reach of the whole staff, together with the accompanying manuals etc. The Quality System Handbook has the following lay-out: the A-section gives information on definitions, management responsibilities, document and data control, inspection and testing, control of quality records, internal quality audits, training etc. The B-section consists of flowcharts and instructions of work procedures.

A very important part of the system is the communication network and the formal routines that come along with it. This is what keeps the system working and alive and keeps all of the staff familiar with (changing) work procedures. A paper with newsflashes on quality appears regularly and quality is on the agenda of all staff meetings. The quality group members meet on a scheduled basis, every 6 weeks or sooner, depending on circumstances. Meanwhile they check the system, and maintenance routines are carried out on the system and the Quality System Handbook. Internal audits and audits by Veritas complete the quality control.

The responsibilities of the Employment Service regarding careers guidance

The Employment Service is responsible for educational and vocational guidance for others than students who take part in regular education programs. The latter is a responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. The task of the counsellors of the employment office is to focus their activities on the unemployed client. If necessary a deeper investigation and exploration of the capacities and possibilities of clients can be offered, free of charge. Therefore the RBA has a contract with the regional Advisory Bureau for Education and Occupation (AOB), where career advisors offer this service. The results of these investigations are reported to the employment office, as well as to the clients. In the next step the employment officer or career counsellor of the employment office will discuss the results with the client and plan further steps. In other cases clients can apply to the Career Guidance Scheme. Financial contributions are based on the income of the client.

As for quality control, mutual arrangements are made to tune the offered services of the AOB to the wants and needs of the client as well as the employment bureau. Every request and every report passes my desk as a routine, and if I find immediate action necessary I will get in touch with either the applying counsellor or placement officer or the AOB, with the aim of reaching a certain standard of quality in both application and report. In most cases the feedback to the AOB takes place in the management consultations between the AOB and our bureau twice a year. For one of these meetings a survey with our remarks is made, after the annual research on the results of combined efforts of clients, Careers Office (AOB) and our bureau as far as career counselling is concerned. This survey is a ISO-9002 demand. In our last contact the AOB suggested they might develop an 'after sales' routine themselves.

Of course it is clear that choosing a career direction is a personal choice, not only because individuals' abilities and personal preferences regarding opportunities and risks differ, but also because one's own market position is in part determined by personal factors. The employment officer and the career counsellor can only momentarily assist in improving one's art of navigating and setting course through adult and working life.

The changing attitude of the staff regarding quality

At first the general reaction on quality improvement was: Why? The results are satisfactory, our goals are reached, it will cost a lot of work and take a lot of time and our customers are satisfied. Now, the staff has become much more critical concerning their own quality of service, the quality image of the organization as a whole, as to the service quality supplied by collaborating organizations.

A precondition for making it possible, to become and remain a quality-minded organization, is Managing Director with a drive for quality improvement. He or she will have to take the lead in a very practical and convincing manner. Only if the highest management stimulates and helps support the importance of being a learning and developing organization - not only as an advocate, but especially in his or her daily actions - the rest of the organization will be inspired to follow.

One thing is sure, after our commitment to an ISO quality system, it will never be the same. It's a never ending process, but we think it is worthwhile!

Fifth section:

The quality of written course information

For many years education has been considered to be a precious collective good which should be open to everybody and shielded from market forces. Regular education and training institutions were by and large fully subsidized by central government and their contribution to the wellbeing of society was more or less taken for granted. However, the uprise of neo-liberalist thinking since the 1980s did not leave the (public) education sector unaffected. In most member states of the European Union we can witness a development of decentralisation often coinciding with deregulation and new forms of public financing related to the performance of educational institutions in terms of input, throughput and output. In other words: the more students entering the school the better it is in financial terms. As a result of these policies schools and colleges find themselves increasingly in a competitive environment when it comes to attracting students. This has its effect on policies in the fields of marketing, public relations, etc. In most member states, information brochures produced by educational institutions are an important source of information for students and counsellors.

From a guidance viewpoint the leading principle is to be as objective and comprehensive as possible in order to enable a student to take all considerations into account and make the best possible choice in terms of his/her own capacities, motivation and labour market prospects. For educational institutions however, it is becoming an economic necessity to present an attractive "image" in order to be sure to attract enough students. Obviously, as a result of this a degree of tension can arise between the purposes of providing objective information and that of recruiting students.

How can this problem be addressed and should it be addressed in an organized way or should the "invisible hand" be left to do its work? This section examines different approaches to and views on this issue.

The first contribution, "Assessing course information material" explains a model that has recently been introduced in the Netherlands. The model consists of a quality assessment tool and a quality assurance method. The code has been drawn up by umbrella organisations of consumers and producers of course information material.
The Dutch national Careers Guidance Information Centre (LDC) is in charge of the overall coordination of the system. The tool has a double function: firstly, it is meant for producers of information brochures (schools and universities) to help them produce good quality information. Secondly, it is an assessment tool that can be used by the target group (students and counsellors) to check the brochures and formulate a complaint. One could say that the market mechanism is used as a regulative force: both good and bad quality can receive publicity.
In preparation of an international expert meeting, a questionnaire has been distributed in the member states that participate in the ENIGMA-project to find out how other member states deal with this issue and to get some "European" reflections on the Dutch approach. All reactions show that the problem described above is a shared one. The assessment tool is without exception appreciated as a valuable and necessary instrument. The method of assuring the implementation of the codes and criteria by installing a complaint commission gave rise to somewhat more nuanced reactions. Although none of them was decisively against such an approach, there were some doubts as to whether such a commission could exercise enough influence to be effective when not connected to the Ministry of Education and having the power to sanction a complaint.

In the second article, "Promoting Quality in Careers Literature in Ireland", John McCarthy presents the approach that has been developed by the Irish Institute of Guidance Counsellors (ICG). Here, we see an approach that is different. The ICG evaluates College literature annually among a large number of students and gives the results to the producers (educational institutions) of the brochures and thus showing them how they can improve client satisfaction. The results of individual colleges remain confidential. The article also gives a comparative reflection on the Dutch model.

The third article, " Quality norms for written information material in Denmark" is a reflection on the Dutch approach seen from a Danish context. Ole Dibbern argues that whilst the situation of competition between schools is also true for Denmark, the Dutch approach of assuring quality standards by installing a complaints commission would probably not work in a Danish context. The main reasons for this being that this could be perceived as a threat to the predominant tradition of the Grundvigian concept of the "living word" in the Danish education system.

Is it sufficient, or even relevant to focus on written information products? Nowadays we live in an era where audio visual and multimedia products are highly influential in shaping the "image" of schools. The fourth article examines the matter from the viewpoint of the science of Public Relations. Dr. Anne van der Meiden argues that written material only has a limited influence, it is not enough to look only at written information: video-clips, CD's, posters, lectures in network meetings and the like are being used to attack the market. Furthermore, Van der Meiden argues that codes and ethical rules of conduct are always based on contemporary norms and values. Rather than formulating codes and criteria which then have to be applied to certain information products, one should examine existing practices in a large number of countries and derive a set of standards from there. This suggestion seems worth trying. It would be highly rewarding if the work of the ENIGMA-group could stimulate the implementation of such an exercise on a European level.

Assessing course information material

By the Dutch National Careers Guidance Information Centre (LDC)

Within the PETRA ENIGMA-project the quality of guidance materials and standards of practice is a central issue. One of the four project themes within ENIGMA concerns an exploration of the possibilities for developing joint quality norms in the field of educational and vocational guidance. This paper presents a model that has recently been introduced in the Netherlands. It focuses on the quality of written information materials that are being produced by educational institutions themselves. This model has served as a starting point for discussion during the international expert-meeting that has been held in February 1995 in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands.

Part one contains a description of the Code Governing Course Information Material, a tool to be used in the assessment of course information material. All of this will need to be tuned and adapted to the needs and wishes of professional groups, student organisations, publishers and educational umbrella organisations.

A Code and an assessment tool that have found general acceptance could fulfil a need because, among other things, the fall in the number of students has caused a degree of tension to appear in some course information material between two functions: that of providing information and that of recruiting students. The Code contains the general values which apply to course information material. The assessment tool indicates the presence of a minimum of objective, real information in course information material.

Considerations such as what 'objectively informative' means, what 'minimum' is required and how the concept of 'sufficient' can be defined should take account of the fact that the principal target group for which the course information is written consists of schoolchildren and students (and their immediate circle) who are attempting to make choices with regard to study, choices that will determine their future direction in life.

The Code and the assessment tool can be used by producers (the makers) of course information material as a guideline in future development of this type of material. In addition the Code and the assessment tool enable the consumer (the user) of course information material to determine what value they place on the information provided when making their choice of study.

1. The Code Governing Course Information Material

The Code Governing Course Information Material can be used as a general starting point when assessing course information material. This Code consists of eight prescriptions, which lay down the generally valid norms which course information material must comply with. Briefly summarised these norms imply that information must be objectively informative and provide a minimum of real information.
A list of points to aid in assessment has been drawn up, based on the Code (see Appendix I) which uses a three-point scale to draw up an evaluation of the material with reference to various subjects.

The Code Governing Course Information Material consists of the following:

I *Aim*

1. Course information should first and foremost serve the interests of the (prospective) student, who must be thereby enabled to make a rational choice for a particular study.

2. Course information should enable all target groups without exception to acquaint themselves with the educational opportunities on offer.

3. Course information aims to make it possible for the consumer to make comparisons between various institutes.

II *Content*

4. Course information should contain correct and verifiable information.

5. Course information should provide at least a minimum of information on the subject dealt with in the material. This minimum is laid down in the list of points designed to assess course information material.

6. With regard to content and presentation, course information material should be adapted to its target group.

III *Presentation*

7. Written course information material should be verifiably up to date. The following should appear in the material: date of publication and period to which the material refers.

8. Written course information material should be easily obtainable. This means that it should be offered free of charge or at an acceptable price and should be made available (from stock) rapidly.

2. The assessment tool for course information material

2.1. Instructions for using the assessment tool

The assessment tool is designed to judge in a consistent manner the quality of course information material provided by various producers. In this context, course information material is regarded as: written material made available to the public and not identifiable as advertising material. This means that every piece of written material available to the public at large and not including anything which could be construed as advertising material can be subjected to assessment by the tool as designed.

The tool consists of a list of aspects to be assessed, which enables a test to be carried out on the extent to which the minimum required amount of information required of course information material is contained in a written publication and how objectively informative it is. The list of aspects assessed can be found in Appendix I.

The list of aspects is divided up into 'general' and 'specific' information. The specific informa-

tion contains a section dealing with the course itself and a section dealing with the facilities provided. The background to this distinction is dealt with in Appendix II.

Each aspect assessed can be awarded a value. The values go from 0 to 2. When a particular aspect is being evaluated account should always be taken of the extent to which the aspect in question is handled in the publication and also the extent to which prescriptions 1 to 4 inclusive and 6 and 7 of the Code Governing Course Information Material are adhered to.

A description is given for each aspect - in table form - of the outer limits in the aspect under scrutiny. On the left-hand side is the negative outer limit, to be awarded the lowest evaluation - zero - by circling the 0 in the table. Any particular aspect scores 0 when it fails to be dealt with in the publication in question.
On the right-hand side is the positive outer limit, the highest evaluation here being a 2, indicated by circling the 2. Any particular aspect scores a 2 when it is dealt with in the publication under scrutiny in such a way that the prescriptions in the Code Governing Course Information Material referred to above are adhered to.
When an aspect is assessed as lying between the 0 and the 2, a 1 can be awarded, depending on the quality of the treatment as experienced by the assessor. A score of 1 is awarded when, although the aspect is dealt with in the publication under scrutiny, this is done in a way that fails to meet one or more of the prescriptions in the Code Governing Course Information Material already referred to. For instance, this can occur when points relevant to the target group are omitted from the essential points that fall under the assessment aspect, while points not relevant to the target group are included.

The information related to the assessment aspect is, in other words, present but as far as content is concerned is not adapted to the relevant target group: prescription 7 of the Code Governing Course Information Material is not adhered to.

An overall evaluation can be made of a particular publication by, for instance, calculating the average score across the board or by calculating the total score of the whole list. However, neither the average score nor the total score fail to say much more about the factual content of the material. The nature of the scores awarded do not permit a mathematical approach.

A total evaluation can also be given by comparing the number of times a 0, a 1 or a 2 is scored.
Which of these overall evaluations works best in practice depends on the way in which a user wants to apply the information.

In order to be able to say of written course information material that it contains a minimum of information expected of such material, all aspects should really gain a 2. Or, to put it another way: the maximum number of points available via the assessment list are gained.
Material can be regarded as 'satisfactory' if it gains at least half the points available under the assessment system. Such material should also be required to score 0 on no single aspect and at least one score 2.

2.2. Aspects to be considered when making a total evaluation on the basis of the tool

The total evaluation based on the tool for assessment and awarded to a publication depends on the aim of the course information material and the viewpoint of the assessor. It is therefore important that these aspects be taken into consideration in the total evaluation of a publication.

A publication designed to provide general information does not need to contain very much specific information, if any at all. But if a publication is intended to provide specific information, it should contain very little general information. Particular assessment aspects included in the list do not apply to such cases and should be disregarded when a total evaluation of the publication is made. This can even apply to whole sections of the list of assessment aspects. Such a decision is that of the assessor alone, to be taken when the aim of the information material is clearly stated in the publication itself.
If the publication is one of a series consisting of publications that complement each other, it is desirable that this be stated and that the other publications be referred to.

It can happen that the quality of a particular assessment aspect is perceived differently by different assessors. This does not necessarily indicate a direct difference in the average or the total score on the basis of the tool for assessment.
A structural difference in the value accorded to an aspect can, however, lead to considerable differences in the average or total score.
A difference in critical attitude between assessors can be one of the causes underlying a structural difference in evaluation. If each assessor's evaluations are set out in graph form, then in the case of a difference of this nature the graphs should show the same pattern. In other words the highs and lows awarded to the various aspects will apply to the same aspects. Despite absolute differences in evaluation, the relative evaluation of the various aspects will thus remain the same. This is why it is very possible to draw justified conclusions regarding the quality of the publication. This is a familiar phenomenon known as intersubjectivity.

2.3. The final evaluation of a publication

It is perhaps not out of place to emphasise that the tool for assessment only permits statements to be made regarding the minimum required information that should appear in course information material; in other words, the extent to which such information is present in the publication and the extent to which it conforms with the prescriptions contained in the Code Governing Course Information Material. Course information material can, in fact, contain a great deal of information. It hardly needs saying that information available in a publication that falls outside the assessment aspects of the scoring list should also be objective in character. To put it more exactly, to fulfil in every way prescriptions 1 to 4 inclusive and 6 and 7 of the Code.

Finally a written publication should provide information as laid down in prescription 7 of the Code and should fulfil the requirements of prescription 8.
This means that in the final evaluation of a publication account should be taken not only of the total score based on the tool for assessment but also of the extent to which the publication fulfils the prescriptions mentioned above.

Appendix I List to enable assessment of course information material

A Generalities

		Evaluation	
A1	**Study in general**		
	No distinction is made between secondary and tertiary studies.	0 1 2	Attention is paid to the differences between studies carried out in the various types of educational institute.
A2	**Aim of the study**		
	No reference is made to the aim or subject of the study in question.	0 1 2	Reference is made to the aims of the study and to the objects to which it refers are dealt with.
A3	**Examinations and qualifications**		
	No reference is made to possible qualifications and examinations.	0 1 2	The potential qualifications and examinations are referred to.
A4	**Comparison of the various studies**		
	No information is provided that would render it possible to make comparisons between similar courses at other institutes.	0 1 2	The information is complemented by material rendering it possible to make comparisons with other institutes.
A5	**Part-time courses**		
	No information is supplied about participation in part-time courses.	0 1 2	Advantages and disadvantages of full-time and part-time courses are discussed.
A6	**Specialisations**		
	No information is given about specialisations during and after the course in question.	0 1 2	Possible specialisations during and after the course are discussed.
A7	**Further education courses**		
	No information is provided on further education courses.	0 1 2	Information is given concerning the place, nature and extent of further education courses.
A8	**Duration of course, final registration date**		
	Nothing is said about final date of registration or duration of the course.	0 1 2	Information is provided regarding duration of course, final date for registration and posiibilities for students who have exceeded their maximum period of enrolment.
A9	**Trade or profession**		
	The material makes no link between the course and any eventual trade or profession.	0 1 2	The links between the course and eventual trade or profession are explained in an honest fashion.
A10	**Course fees**		
	No information is provided about the course fees involved nor about any other costs which might be incurred.	0 1 2	Information is provided about course fees and all other costs involved in registration.

A11	Grants and loans		
	No information is provided relative to grants and loans.	0 1 2	All relevant information as contained in the legislation governing grants and loans for educational purposes is supplied in the document.

A12	Military service		
	No information is offered with regard to military service.	0 1 2	Information is supplied regarding military service and postponement of same.

B Specific: the course

B1	Conditions of admission		
	No information is provided about conditions of admission, recommended subject package or any remedial teaching needed to meet deficiencies in previous education.	0 1 2	The material details essential and desirable previous education and knowledge and gives advice in this area.

B2	Didactic design		
	Nothing is said about the didactic design and form of the course.	0 1 2	The didactic design and overall approach taken by the course is detailed.

B3	Student counselling		
	No mention is made of the existence - or not - of student counselling.	0 1 2	It is clearly stated that there is a system of student counselling and its functioning is described.

B4	Course burden		
	No mention at all is made of the burden imposed by the study or of the hours required by the course.	0 1 2	The material makes clear what sort of burden the study imposes and how many hours on average are required for each part of the course.

B5	Testing and examinations		
	Nothing is said about the testing and examination system.	0 1 2	The system of testing and the examinations are clearly explained.

B6	Cooperation with other institutes		
	Nothing is said about cooperation with other institutes relative to the course.	0 1 2	Cooperation and exchanges with other educational institutes at home and abroad is clearly outlined.

B7	Extra costs		
	No indication whatsoever is given of any extra costs likely to be incurred for practicals or obligatory memberships.	0 1 2	Information is included regarding all extra costs relative to the course.

C Specific: the facilities

C1	**Basic philosophy**		
	No information is given about the basic philosophy of the educational institute.	0 1 2	Information is provided regarding the basic philosophy of the institute.
C2	**Size of institute and accommodation**		
	No information is given about the size of the institute, whether there is a campus and what accommodation is available.	0 1 2	Information is provided regarding the size of the institute, campus, accommodation and suchlike.
C3	**Provisions for the handicapped**		
	Nothing is said about provisions for the handicapped nor about other groups requiring special attention.	0 1 2	Provisions for the handicapped and other special groups are listed.
C4	**Student organisations**		
	There is no mention of student organisations.	0 1 2	Information is provided about student organisations and other organisations linked to the course.
C5	**Student advisers**		
	No information is given about student advisers and the organisation of a student advisory service.	0 1 2	Emphasis is placed on the existence and functioning of a student advisory service.
C6	**Student clubs**		
	Nothing is said about student clubs.	0 1 2	A good description is provided of the student clubs present.
C7	**Culture and Sport**		
	No information is provided about cultural, sport and recreational facilities for students.	0 1 2	A description is given of the opportunities students have for cultural, sport and recreational activities.
C8	**Extra information**		
	Nothing is said about the possibility of obtaining further information.	0 1 2	The material states how it is possible to receive further information, either in writing or via the telephone.
C9	**Registration procedure**		
	Nothing is said about the application and registration procedure.	0 1 2	The application and registration procedure is clearly laid out.

Appendix II Background to the assessment tool

The list of aspects to be assessed is linked to a distinction drawn between three levels of information:

The first level covers all information that is not specific to the institute. This usually refers to generally applicable information and facts that can be checked objectively, such as rules laid down by legislation and nationally accepted standards, general information regarding cour-es, etc.

The second level involves information specific to the institute, which can and must be supplied within a wider context in order to facilitate comparison.
Information of this kind has to serve to help in the making of a selection which seems to offer the best opportunities to a specific 'consumer' (the person deciding on which study course to follow). The information must therefore serve to render possible a considered choice: "Why should I choose to follow course X at institute Y and not at institute Z?"

The third level covers all the information unique to each particular institute.
Things that belong here include detailed information regarding the design and form of the course at the institute in question, matters to do with basic philosophy and belief, activities organised for and by students, facilities, etc.

This distinction between the levels of information also plays an important part in the assessment list. An absolute distinction between the various levels is not, however, possible. A certain amount of overlap is unavoidable. For instance, because of the need to be able to draw comparisons, information at the second level is in general more global than similar information at the third level.

A distinction that can be maintained in practice has been applied as follows:
General information covers whatever is included under level 1 as described above, plus the information at level 2 permitting comparison between the institutes.
Specific information covers whatever is included under level 3. The specific information is split into two parts, one of which refers to matters related to the course, while the other deals with the provision of facilities.

Complaints about course information material

In the introduction of part one it was stated that course information material is sometimes characterised by a certain tension between 'providing information' and 'recruiting students'. The Code and the assessment tool can be used as a basis for a complaint regarding the content and form of course information material. This is the reason for proposing here a method to be used for submitting a complaint concerning course information material. A commission can be created, in consultation with all those involved, which would deal with all such complaints according to a procedure laid down beforehand. Any statements issued by the Commission can, like the Code and the assessment instrument, be used by producers of course information material as a basis when producing this type of material and by consumers of course information material to gain some notion of the value of the material.
The next few paragraphs propose a framework for such a commission and the procedure it could follow.
The starting point for a complaints procedure is that contact has first been sought with the producer of the course information material and that this has not elicited a satisfactory response.

The appropriate body when it comes to complaints about advertising is for the Netherlands the Nationale Reklame Code Commissie (the National Advertising Code Commission). The procedure followed by the European Advertising Standards Alliance (EASA) in dealing with complaints has served as model for the procedure laid down here.

1. A Course Information Material Complaints Commission

It may be necessary to appoint a body to deal with complaints, a body consisting of a secretariat to handle the administration and a complaints commission to investigate the substance of any complaints submitted.

The substantive assessment of complaints can be dealt with by an independent commission

to be known as the Complaints Commission for Course Information Material. It can be composed of individuals chosen according to the following criteria:

- members are appointed to the Commission on the basis of recommendations made by the various bodies representing producers and consumers of course information material already represented in the steering committee;
- the Complaints Commission shall consist of an odd number of members including the chairman;
- producers and consumers of course information material shall be equally represented in the commission;
- the chairman shall be a legal expert and shall not be a member of any body involved in course information;
- the members of the Complaints Commission shall issue statements in their own name, even if they are linked with bodies operating in the field of course information material;
- the members of the Complaints Commission shall be experts in the field of study and career guidance.

The choice was made to have members of the Complaints Commission proposed by the various bodies representing producers and consumers of course information material in order to give these same bodies a feeling of involvement with the Complaints Commission and its statements. Commission members issue statements on a personal basis in order to ensure that they are guided in their judgements by their personal skills.

2. A complaints procedure with reference to course information material

2.1. Who can submit a complaint?

Any complaint referring to course information material can be submitted by every natural or legal person in their own country.

2.2. What can be the subject of complaints submitted?

Any complaint submitted must refer to a lack of information or faulty information encountered by the user in course information material. In this context course information material means any written material made available to the general public and not identifiable as advertising material. This means that a complaint can be submitted relative to any written publication available to everyone and not accompanied by a statement that it is advertising material.

Complaints relating to advertising material can be submitted to the Nationale Reclame Code Commissie (National Advertising Standards Commission).

2.3. Where and how can a complaint be submitted?

The complaint should be submitted in writing and supported with arguments. It should be submitted to the Commission appointed for this purpose.

2.4. How can a complaint be dealt with?

The complainant is informed by return of post that the Commission has received the complaint.
The commission chairman, exclusively in conjunction with the other commission members, may reject the complaint if he is of the opinion that the complaint can be immediately identified as groundless. This can be the case, for instance, if the matter refers to individuals. In such a case the chairman can advise the complainant to refer the matter to the courts.
The complaint can also be rejected if the Commission is of the opinion that the nature of the complaint is such that it will not lead to a statement being issued.

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In the decision to deal with a complaint or not, the Code Governing Course Information Material and the assessment list based on the Code is taken into account (see Appendix I).

Whatever decision is arrived at, the complainant should be informed within four weeks that the complaint is being dealt with or that the complaint has been rejected, this latter accompanied by reasons for the decision taken.

In the case of complaints accepted for processing, the person, persons or body against whom the complaint is lodged should receive a written account of the complaint, accompanied by a request to submit counter-arguments in writing. Any such counter-arguments are submitted to the complainant. If so desired, both parties can meet the members of the Commission to explain their case further. In such an eventuality both parties can solicit the support of expert witnesses. The Commission too can call on expert witnesses. Finally the publication against which the complaint was originally submitted can be tested by the Commission or by third parties, using the tool for assessment of course information material, and can include the results of any such testing in the Commission's final judgement.
In principle the Complaints Commission could meet once every two months. The Commission's decision should imparted to the parties to the complaint within two weeks of the matter being dealt with.
This means that a complaint is dealt with within a maximum of three months.

2.5. The statement regarding a complaint

Any statement issued by the Complaints Commission can consist of one of the following:

1 rejection of the complaint;
2 complaint upheld; the complaint is declared to be grounded and the person or persons or body against whom the complaint was brought is/are informed of the Commission's decision;
3 public declaration; the Commission publishes its decision by means of a public announcement and a statement issued to the press and to the official bodies.

The statement implies no legal consequences for complainant or party against whom the complaint was lodged.

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Promoting quality in careers literature in Ireland:

A case study of course information material - with transnational comparison

Background
Approximately 52% of school-leavers at age 18 in Ireland continue onwards to a total of forty one university and other third level colleges to pursue higher education. Consequently much of a school's guidance counsellor's time with this age group is spent assisting them to make mature choices of courses. Increasing dissatisfaction among guidance counsellors with the presentation and delivery of university and college course information literature inspired one guidance counsellor, Tom Farrell, to influence the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (a voluntary organisation representing the professional interests of qualified guidance counsellors) to set up a sub-committee in the school-year 1992-93 to examine the existing course information literature, to give feedback to the universities and colleges, and to make recommendations for improvement.

Methodology 1992-93
This sub-committee, under Tom Farrell's management, drew up a set of dimensions under which the design, content and availability of the course literature could be examined. It devised a six point rating scale (5=excellent to 0=non-existent) to score the products of individual colleges. The dimensions rated were:

- Timing of arrival of the literature in schools
- Number of copies supplied to a school
- Size
- Index
- Number of places available on a course
- Course codes for application
- Layout

- Overall design
- Entry requirements
- Course information
- Career paths
- Summary charts
- Cost of the course
- Alert list for changes from the previous year
- Expiry date of the literature
- Pagination

Results
The sub-committee examined and scored the course information literature of the 25 universities and colleges who share a common application procedure. The results of their judgements were presented to the institutions in two forms:

1. The total score for each university and college was presented in rank order form on a bar chart. Each institution was informed where its rank order position was on the bar chart but was not informed of the identity of the other colleges on the bar chart. It was felt that such confidentiality was fair to all since the universities and colleges were not made aware that such an examination was taking place and that this was the first time that the Institute of Guidance Counsellors were making such judgements.

2. Bar charts for each university and college were constructed showing how their individual course information literature fared on the rating scale for each of the dimensions listed above. Each university and college received only its own feedback.

3. A summary bar chart of the total scores for each dimension across all the institutions highlighted the items that required most attention from a global perspective

The results were sent to the Admissions Officers of the universities and colleges with explanations as to the method by which the scores had been arrived at and how the charts should be understood. An evaluative commentary and recommendations for improvement accompanied the results. The reaction of the institutions came mainly from those who were very pleased and very displeased by the results. Some were anxious to find out the identity of the other institutions in the rank order bar chart! It is difficult to assess and measure precisely the impact on the institutions of receiving these results because the exercise was not repeated in 1993-94 due to a lack of Institute of Guidance Counsellors' personnel to undertake the task. Anecdotal evidence, however, suggests that institutions who recorded both extremes of reactions improved their literature!

Methodology 1994-95
In 1994-95 the sub-committee was re-established under the leadership of Loretta Jennings. This new group added a significant feature to the methodology of the judgements by asking the primary users - students aged 16-18 years - to assess the course information literature using the same rating scale as the experienced guidance counsellors who formed the sub-committee. A panel of 30 students rated the literature. Their results were cross-validated with another group of 30 students using qualitative analysis through group discussion on the literature. The overall student results were correlated with the ratings of the sub-committee. The number of institutions whose literature was assessed had increased form 25 to 41 in the intervening period.

Results
The out come of the new approach was a report entitled "Survey of College Literature" by Cait Mhc Roibeaird and Loretta Jennings, a copy of which is appended to this article. The report providing recommendations for improvement was circulated to the Admissions Officers of the institutions along with an individual college result chart and a chart giving the average rating for each dimension across all of the institutions. The sub-committee felt that the focus should be on accurate, up-to-date and on-time literature, produced in a format readily understood and attractive to end users i.e 16-18 year old students. The "league table" bar chart showing the composite total scores obtained by each college was also presented. However, the

identity of the other institutions was kept confidential on the bar chart as had applied in the 1992-93 survey.

Direct overall comparisons between data gathered in 1992-93 and 1994-95 are not possible because of the increase in the number of participating institutions (25 to 41) and the use of a different method of calculating overall scores (totals versus average ratings). Significant changes, however, appear to have occurred. In 1992-93, the dimensions - number of places, index and alert list - occupied the three lowest rankings. In 1994-95 these dimensions were rated on average as "good", "good" and "excellent" respectively.

The reaction of the institutions to the latest report has already produced some positive results. CAO\CAS, the organisation responsible for the common selection procedure, has expressed strong interest in supporting the improvements suggested in the report and a new committee consisting of representatives of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors, CAO\CAS, and AOA (Admissions Officers Association) has been formed to address issues regarding course information from the universities and colleges. All of the interested parties, including the guidance counsellors, have been very impressed by the suggestions of the students and this has given a stimulus to the institutions to make improvements. Such improvements will not be evident and measurable until the new batch of course information literature come on stream in Autumn 1995. A reading of the appended report is highly recommended.

IRELAND and the NETHERLANDS: Transnational Comparison of Approach to Promoting Quality in Course Information Material.

A cursory glance at the Code Governing the Provision of Course Information Material (LDC, 1994) shows certain similarities and differences in approach between the partner countries. The similarities concern (i) the motivation behind these developments - to assist young people and parents in the process of deciding which course in which college a student should choose, and (ii) the dimensions of course information materials to be assessed. In the case of the latter, however, some differences in emphasis appear which reflect the different student demographic contexts and the different institutional contexts of the quality promoters.

In the first instance, young people under the age of 28 years form 51% of the population of Ireland. The universities and colleges whose information materials were surveyed have on average three persons applying for each student place they can offer (for the popular courses and for numerus clausus courses the ratio is far higher). The institutions do not currently have to compete for "good students". Consequently market forces play little or no role in motivating institutions to improve their materials. This has implications also for publication budgets. The tension between "recruitment" and "real" information referred to in the LDC Code and reiterated through the use of words such as "real", "correct and verifiable information" is less likely to be an issue among users and intermediaries in Ireland. The IGC report stresses words such as "accurate, up to date, attractive". A desire for excellence and institutional pride were and are the main motivators for good practice among the better rated Irish institutions.

The LDC Code pays more attention to the mathematical properties and meaningfulness of assessment scores and to formal procedures for investigation of complaints. These are essentially linked as the complaints can be challenged and the end result is a public statement of judgement (albeit with no legal consequences!). These formal aspects perhaps reflect the public responsibility of LDC in the provision of careers information in general in the Netherlands. The IGC in Ireland does not have this responsibility. The findings of its assessment remain confidential and as such are not open to legal challenge. From an IGC perspective, the absence of confidentiality could also undermine the good working relationship that has been developed with the institutions over a long number of years. The IGC approach could be described as a subtlety of experienced practitioners.

Despite differences in procedures and public responsibility, neither the LDC nor the IGC have the power to compel change in the less quality conscious institutions. Both are, however, good example of different approaches - formal and informal - in promoting quality standards in college course information materials. They highlight the need to involve professionals, intermediaries and end-users in the quest for quality.

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APPENDIX ONE
IGC SURVEY OF COLLEGE LITERATURE 1994/95

by Cait Mhic Robeaird and Loretta Jennings

There has been considerable dissatisfaction with literature provided by some colleges over the years though much of the criticism has been taken into consideration in the design, content and availability of college literature.

The literature surveyed is that which would normally be sent in response to a request for general information by schools. While many colleges responded immediately, others took several days before posting literature. There has been considerable dissatisfaction on the literature package. A request for literature was made in November but many of the colleges failed to respond to a faxed request which necessitated a number of phone calls being made in January. While many responded immediately, others took several days before posting literature.

The enclosed charts detail the results of the evaluation which was undertaken by a group of Transition Year students, most of whom were intending to apply for third level places, and by two guidance counsellors. The students worked in groups of three and were asked to agree on a score for each aspect of the literature as follows:

Timing of Arrival
Number of Copies
Size
Table of Contents
Index
Number of Places
Course Codes
Layout
Overall Design
Entry Requirements
Course Information
Career Paths
Summary Charts
Cost of Course
Alert List
Expiry Date
Pagination

Their results were then compared with those of the guidance counsellors and a composite score was determined for each college.

The scoring system was on a five point scale from 5 = excellent to 1 = poor. 0 indicates that the feature was non existent, not applicable or may not have been easily found, necessitating reading the prospectus in more detail. 4 is considered very good but room for improvement e.g. pagination. Table of Contents - colour coding, position, size could be improved.

The survey cannot by its nature be totally objective but the results should prove useful to those compiling college literature.

Each student was given the opportunity to examine all college literature and a discussion on the best attributes of college prospectuses revealed the following:

Timing of Arrival:
It was unanimously agreed that literature should be available in schools in early September, at the latest early November. For the purposes of the survey, colleges who only sent information on request scored lowly despite early availability. Most of the information regarding timing of arrival and number of copies were obtained by phone from the admissions offices rather than depending on memory. An estimate was given for 5 colleges where we failed to make direct contact.

Number of Copies:
Students felt that they should be able to receive an individual copy in school; at the very least there should be 20 copies sent automatically to each school for every 100 Leaving Certificate students for lending purposes. The ideal would be that each school is sent an order form before the end of the previous academic year and the appropriate number is sent in bulk to each school. This should save colleges considerable amounts on postage costs and time spent dealing with individual requests for information. Numbers were obtained by phone from the college admissions office as to how many are posted automatically to schools. The accuracy of this section is dependent on the information supplied by the colleges. Those who subsequently send required numbers on request received slightly higher marks.

Size:
A4 Definitely received the THUMBS DOWN - it was too big! Both A5 and Extended A5 which the majority of British colleges have opted for, were the most acceptable. Neither won out right. However, when overall layout and design of page were considered, it was felt that the Extended A5 was best. College Name should be incorporated on the spine if the literature size permits. Folders and slip-in booklets though useful from the guidance' counsellors point of view as they are easily photocopied, did not appeal to students who found specific contents difficult to locate.From the guidance counsellor's point of view, shelving of literature is facilited by a uniform size, both height and width.

Table of Contents:
A small number of colleges fail to provide a table of contents, which makes locating information tedious. The colour coding or division of courses into schools\faculties was preferred but colleges should agree on a common colour coding system.

Index:
An index would greatly supplement a table of contents and would facilitate the location of specific information.

Number of Places:
Students welcomed the inclusion of number of places on each course or at least some indication of the overall size of college. Students will thus be able to judge the first year environment. This information may not be finalised at the time of going to press but some indication of the previous year's numbers might be useful, indicating whether numbers are increasing or decreasing.

Course Codes:
The inclusion of CAO\CAS course codes is essential, and students felt that course codes and information should be listed together for each subject i.e. indicate the course code for each subjects have the same code as in ARTS or SCIENCE in some colleges.

Layout:
Consistency in layout of contents between colleges would help. Some unnecessary and irrelevant information such as lengthy lists of staff are included where the course director, would suffice.

Overall Design:
Students like the use of colour photographs, though they felt that it was not necessary to use

them throughout the publication. Initial pages with details of accommodation, sporting and library facilities etc. should be included to give some idea of what the college is like.

Entry Requirements:
Listings of basic and specific requirements were preferred to descriptive sentences. It was also felt that in particular specific course requirements should be located as close to the main body of information on each course, not just on an overall chart.

Course Information:
An essential ingredient so adequate comparison of similar courses in different colleges can be made. Students were content with listing of course subjects, but more details were preferred.

Career Paths:
A clear statement of both career and postgraduate study (if Applicable) opportunities available to graduates of each course was felt to be most important.

Summary Charts:
Quick reference which sums up information given elsewhere in the publication, e.g. Summary Table of Application Procedures, Cut Off-Points for Previous years, List of Courses with Entry Requirements, Flow Chart of Possible Career Paths.

Cost of Course:
Not an overly important detail for students and the scores might reflect this as they were content with a clear listing of fees. If they found them difficult to locate, scores reflect this. In addition, details of maintenance costs for students, additional costs for examinations equipment, student membership of professional bodies etc. would be most welcome in particular by parents.

Alert List:
A summary table showing new courses and changes to existing courses, entry requirements etc. would alert guidance counsellors to important changes. This should be incorporated into the prospectus and not merely an additional sheet. Some alert list were in fact difficult to locate or were separate from the prospectus and the results reflect this.

Expiry Date:
It was felt that this should be on the cover and \ or spine but stated clearly. Students had difficulty for example with "1995 - 1996", and asked if this was for both years of entry. This was more confusing when the prospectus covered two years e.g. "1995 -1997". They did not like "95'96" and it was agreed that it was best to state a single year e.g. "1995 Entry" and if it was for a two year period then "1995 and 1996 Entry". Some colleges did include the date on the cover but the overall design make it not so obvious and the results reflect this.

Pagination
The system of numbering by chapter was found to be cumbersome and a straight-forward system was preferred. Maximum points went to literature with colour coded pagination and to those whose page numbers were easy to read while flicking through the book i.e. page-edge numbers were the easiest to use rather than centred ones.

Additional Features which students found useful were the inclusion of a compass and location map, along with details of travel e.g. bus, train etc.

The inclusion of Telephone\Fax Numbers in a prominent position i.e. back cover, inside front cover is also suggested. Lists of departmental direct - dial telephone numbers or extensions should also be included.

Results are supplied in chart form for your college along with a composite chart for all the colleges surveyed. Each college's result remains confidential.
The survey has been carried out on behalf of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors and we hope that the findings will be of benefit to you in the production of your 1996 college literature which guidance counsellors look forward to receiving next September.

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Quality norms for written information material in Denmark

That the ENIGMA-group has seized the initiative to take on board the discussion of the quality of written information material in a European context, does come in useful in a situation where guidance in Denmark by many is seen as standing at the crossroads. And when now a model for quality assessment of written information material is at hand, some chords are struck whose twang have so far never been heard in the Danish guidance tradition.

The bodies that are in charge of coordination and information provision in the field of guidance, primarily the National Council for Educational and Vocational Guidance (R.U.E), have of course had some thoughts concerning this. The council has even edited a minor leaflet that gives good advice on how to produce written information material. However, these attempts at defining good practice have never been systematized and coordinated in a way that ressembles the "Codes and criteria for written course information".

The question is then to what extent such an initiative can be applied to Danish guidance traditions and the formal and informal culture that has established itself on all levels in education and training. It is not possible to say anything definite about this as long as the proposed model has not been extensively discussed in Denmark, but it is certainly possible to give an intelligent guess as to how it would be received when this happens. And if this guess turns out to be wrong after all, it only goes to prove how composite and unpredictable the guidance field is.

The proposal falls in two separate parts: one dealing with the quality in written information material, the other with the composition of a structure that is to be equipped with the necessary authority to take action against information material of an unacceptable quality. Let us discuss these two matters separately.

If one looks at the first aim, to develop a tool to measure the quality of written information material, it is no understatement to say that such an instrument could be of great use in Denmark, especially today. With the reform of 1991, Danish vocational schools have now achieved status as private foundations and acquired autonomy as regards their budgets. The

schools are given a so called "taximeter-grant" from the Danish state, which means that the number of enrolled students alone decides the size of the subvention. In such a situation, it is obvious that the guidance counsellor risks coming under pressure, in that the tasks entrusted to him now can be seen as having two distinct aims: one of which is to give information and guidance to the student concerning his or her future educational and vocational prospects, the other to be a party in the school's marketing efforts. In the second capacity, he will be expected to help attract students and to them in the school in order - literally - to keep it in business.

On the background of this development, written information material becomes interesting as the same dual purpose also manifests itself here. The individual school may be tempted to produce information material that is not merely informative, but also plays a role in marketing the school and highlighting it at the expense of other educational offers. Hereby the problem to which the ENIGMA tool addresses itself also becomes a specific Danish area of concern.

In the first years of the new era there has thus already been some very marked instances of schools that have provided course information that is bordering on the unacceptable. One should draw a line between objective course information and subjective marketing material, but the tendency is very much one where the two are mixed to a degree where it is extremely difficult for the student to distinguish between them.

There is thus no doubt that the initiative taken by the LDC in the Netherlands and the ENIGMA-group will be of interest to Danish guidance circles, but it is worth taking note of the fact that these have not themselves initiated similar activities in order to discuss regional or national standards for written information material. There has undoubtedly been much discussion on a local level, to which a number of articles in various magazines bear witness, but there is a large distance between this and the elaboration on a national level of joint quality norms. In the autumn of 1994, R.U.E asked counsellors at a number of nationwide guidance seminars whether they would be interested in the introduction of such standards. The answer was very unequivocal, in that almost all counsellors felt that there was no need for these. If one is to speculate about the causes for this, one likely explanation is that many of the problems appear locally, and therefore also are solved locally, and not through central intervention.

But the million-dollar question is whether the tool developed in the Netherlands is one that can function in a Danish environment, or whether it contains so many alien elements that it will be rejected. The answer can of course only be guessed at, and my guess is that it will arouse a certain interest, but that the introduction of a similar code will be rejected after some deliberation and discussion.

One reason for this will be - seen from the management's point of view - that the schools will want to maintain the freedom they have at present to create their own profile, also in the information and marketing material that they produce. Even though individual schools may see some sense in the formulation of some norms governing the elaboration of information material, the same schools will probably see an overruling interest in being able to inform about the courses offered without having to accept the constraints of a set of standards on this. This is hardly surprising.

Seen from a counsellor's perspective, things may look somewhat different. In many cases it is the director who has the responsibility for producing information material, and the counsellor only plays a minor - if any - role here. A counsellor might thus want to see such standards introduced in order to avoid a situation where he or she has to deal with discontented students that feel misled by the school's information material. Such problems are most frequently dealt with by the counsellors and not the director, and the existence of a set of codes and criteria could ensure that he stuck to a version of the truth that was acceptable to the counsellor.

On the other hand - and here we come to a very specific feature of Danish guidance traditions - many counsellors would probably regard the introduction of such standards with a certain animosity, arguing that counselling at the end of the day is about establishing a dialogue between the counsellor and the client, and that the existence of "perfect" guidance material might reduce the need for the clients to seek the advice of the counsellor, thus preventing the

dialogue from coming into being. Especially in a Danish context I could imagine this argument to be fielded with considerable force, as the Danish educational tradition to a marked degree builds on the existence of a non-hierarchal relationship between the institution, represented by the counsellor and the client.

In the Danish tradition of education, the Grundtvigian concept of "the living word" (as opposed to the "dead" - i.e written - word) is sacrosanct, also in school systems where one could expect this to be somewhat diluted, e.g in vocational schools. To establish such rigid demands on written information material might well activate the fear that the powers of "the living word" would be weakened. Their very existence could dissuade the client from entering into a dialogue with the counsellor.

In the light of this I would believe a discussion of the possibilities of a Danish implementation of such a tool would result in a kind but firm rejection of it. There is a need to heighten the quality of written information material, and there is also a need to discuss the introduction of certain ethical rules of the game in this context; but the regard for the freedom of the involved parties in the guidance field to base the process on dialogue rather than information from written sources would probably overrule these considerations, even though it may not seem a very logical conclusion to an outsider.

A parallel to this discussion is found in the way in which guidance circles in Denmark have reacted to the introduction of computer-based tools, especially the use of psychometric testing devices for students with various learning disabilities. There is a very sceptical attitude towards such remedies, based on the fear that they might in time develop into becoming the substance of the guidance process, replacing the all-important dialogue between counsellor and client. There is no doubt that many schools have acquired the various computer programmes that already have been developed (e.g MAXI-DUE, SPOR), but there is equally no doubt that these programmes, due to the above described Grundtvigian attitude among Danish guidance counsellors, lead a somewhat obscure life.

When one therefore attempts to predict the result of a Danish debate on a code for the provision of written information material, the outcome is that whereas the Danish counsellors may readily admit the necessity for developing such a tool because they are under pressure by their directors' wish to coordinate counselling and marketing, they will probably reject the thought of introducing the Dutch model because it has been developed centrally and because its very existence entails the risk of having a detrimental influence on the central issue of the dialogue as the very core of guidance. The development of "perfect" written information material will be seen as an action that may numb the initiative and curiosity of the client, and thereby weaken the conditions for establishing the sacrosanct dialogue.

Guidance is best when it is developed locally and is understood as a pedagogical activity that should not necessarily be described and measured, but lives in a symbiotic, dialogue between counsellor and client.

Complaints about written information material

The second half of the ENIGMA-paper considers how complaints about unacceptable written information material may be dealt with.

The gist of the paper is that a national board should be set up that is competent to deal with such complaints and which can reprimand schools or institutions that have given bad quality information on various courses. The board must thus have the right to draw the attention of the public to examples of low quality information as a warning to other schools. The question now is how such a proposal would be viewed in Denmark.

With the remarks that have already been made concerning the Danish situation, it is by no means unthinkable that the need for dealing with complaints about information material is present. Notoriously bad information material is produced in Denmark, and there has more likely than not already been scores of examples of students that have felt misinformed about educational matters and have wanted to complain about it. However, no such bodies exist that can deal with these complaints, except from the school itself, the Ministry of Education and the Ombudsman. The latter possesses formal powers to point out any misleading information in the cases where a "consumer-relationship" is deemed to exist - which might indeed be the

case when we are talking about consumer-paid educational activities. The question is, however, whether he would consider other cases. The school may of course receive a complaint, but is unlikely to do more than apologise to the party that lodged the complaint. The only remaining possibility is to complain to the Ministry of Education.

It is debatable, however, whether there is any point in setting up a national body with the powers to bring such complaints to the attention of the public. I myself do not think so.

Yet again it is necessary to bear in mind that this question must be answered in the light of the culture that surrounds the Danish guidance system and indeed the whole educational system. If one imagines the establishment of a central body, it would simultaneously mean a clean break with a Danish tradition for building on mutual confidence between those seeking education and the educational establishment, and a tradition for having only one central body to deal with complaints, namely the Ministry of Education. It would maybe be possible to imagine a situation where the coordinating body in the field of guidance, R.U.E, was given such competence. This would seem obvious, in that R.U.E already is in charge of developing the quality of guidance in Denmark; but I have a hunch that R.U.E would very much like to avoid this additional task. The activities of R.U.E are based on a universally shared recognition of the council as a neutral construction that alone acts on behalf of the counsellors in matters relating to development and training. If R.U.E was given the competence to comment upon less satisfactory guidance activities, it is easy to envisage a situation where the credibility of R.U.E to act as a focal point would become tenuous, as it would not be possible to avoid making decisions that would alienate some counsellors. This possibility is consequently out of the question.

There remains the question of whether a new body outside those already existing should be established. Again, I believe the answer would be in the negative. If such a body was set up, it would cut across the traditions which decree that such communication problems be dealt with on the spot and locally, with the possibility of the Ministry interfering at a later stage to express its disapproval. Such a body would in all likelihood also bring into existence a massive bureaucracy, and its very existence lead to the emergence of complaints that could have been dealt with summarily in a talk between the institution and the party lodging the complaint. The setting up of a third party as the first recipient of the complaint runs the risk of making the matter unnecessarily complicated.

In a situation where the individual student may "report" an institution for misleading information to such a body, there is a strong temptation for him to jump into the role as an anonymous education consumer, who, in the event of dissatisfaction with a given piece of information, opts for the roles remote plaintiff instead of choosing the less formal way of a talk with the person responsible for the information output of the school. If such a talk does not lead to the desired result, there is always the possibility of lodging a formal complaint with the Ministry of Education, and there is no reason to believe that a such system in a Danish context would not be sufficient when it comes to dealing with complaints about information material.

In the ENIGMA paper there are no explicit arguments in favour of the placement of a complaints council outside the Ministry, and the question therefore arises as to what the intention of this proposal actually is. The council may of course by its very existence be said to confer a certain legitimation to the institutions, but apparently there is in the model nothing that argues against the Dutch Ministry of Education assuming this role. According to the LDC, there has to this day been only very few complaints to deal with, and this may seem to corroborate the sceptical Danish viewpoints as they have been reflected here.

In all circumstances I think that this model, if put to Danish educational establishments and politicians, would very much be seen as going against the grain of the dominant trend in recent years, namely the efforts to decentralise and de-bureaucratise the area of education.

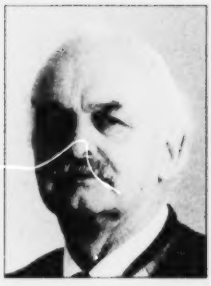
Conclusion

In the preceding pages I have argued that these quality criteria would probably not be adopted if proposed in Denmark, and that this has to do with a specific Danish way of looking at education as a very personal matter, and guidance in this context as a thing that should never go very much beyond the personal encounter - the dialogue - between the client and a profes-

sional with extensive knowledge of the area. Seen from a Danish viewpoint, the model suffers from the weakness that it does not reflect the unintended system changes it can cause if implemented without any further consideration about how it in turn may impinge on the roles and the relationship of confidence that exists between the client and the educational system.

Having said this, it must be added that a discussion of the model on the other hand may contribute to an awareness amongst Danish educationalists about the necessity for a debate about quality and ethics in guidance. Unless we do that, there is a very real danger that the school reforms previously described will move like a steamroller over Danish guidance culture. And as a matter of fact the Danish Rectors' Conference Secretariat, which is an association for directors of institutes of higher education in Denmark, in March 1995 proposed that a committee be formed in Denmark to discuss the quality of written information material.

The proposals may therefore contribute to a process where the Danish guidance environment is inspired to discuss in depth, educational and vocational guidance in the future, and especially the demands that must be made on information material - not only written, but maybe in particular electronic media which is under constant development and which accentuates this discussion and places in question the entire Danish guidance tradition.



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is a doctor in philosophical ethics and has taught mass communication and public relations at various institutes of higher vocational education. He has written some 20 books on theological subjects, advertising, propaganda and public relations, as well as a number of novels set in the Twente region of the Netherlands.

Summary of contribution to the Enigma expert meeting on quality in information

LDC asked me to join de PETRA/ENIGMA-meeting because of my participation in several discussions on ethics, in the fields of Information, Advertising and Public Relations. I'm still a member of the Board of Supervisors, guiding the Codes of Ethics and Rules of Conduct for Telemarketing and Direct Marketing.
In the past, during my job as Head of the Dept. of Information and Public Relations of the University of Utrecht, I was involved in Careers Guidance and Student's information services.

In our days we see some trends coming up in the fields of:
- consumers information
- counselling
- product information.

These trends undoubtedly will influence the work of guidance practitioners and their materials and the work of the ENIGMA-group. I restrict myself to a few headlines in recent discussions. There is hardly any research-based literature in this field available.

What we see is an ongoing erosion of objective information and a move into the direction of "selling schools and courses".
Advertising- and propaganda-related terms are used in pamphlets posters and brochures, like: modern schools, young teachers, inspiring environment, high standards in sports, adequate facilities, outstanding student's facilities, positive perspectives on jobs, etcetera. Pictures and art-work are "gin and tonic" and sometimes the materials do not go beyond an idea of "have a nice time, don't worry, be happy".
The emphasis is on: extra's, atmosphere, non-educational aspects.

Secondly, we see an ongoing erosion in reliable information on the position of the education in society. Questions like:
- Who are supporting this school/university/college? Government? Private enterprises? Foundations? What kind of organizations/companies do effectively support the institution with money, material support, etcetera.
- What is the influence of sponsors in the board of the institutions? Do they have a "say" in the programme?
- What is the role of sponsors in the placement of the graduates?
- What is the "level" in terms of acceptance in public opinion and in branches, in the market. More and more we are confronted with vague new one-year's Master's programme's, offered by "mysterious" universities and colleges from abroad.
- What is the value of the certificates and diploma's? Are they officially recognized by Governments and accepted as qualifications for prosecution professions and teaching?
- How is quality-control on teaching and exams organized?

Improving the quality of Information and Guidance materials, should not be restricted to written, printed materials.
More institutions use the integrated attack on the market: printed materials, video-clips, CD's, cassettes, posters, lectures in network-meetings, private information-sessions for small groups (the "tupperware" technique). Enigma should therefor not restrict their activities to the printed sector, because of the fact that this printed material will be more and more just a part of a package of media and cannot be regarded as an independent medium. There is a kind of "osmosis" between the media that are used. That restricts interpretation and judgment of texts. My thesis is: there is hardly any isolated printed material any more in the field of Information and Guidance. So: re-consider your own field of study and advise.

Talking about quality of materials and measuring of quality, we should discern at least four types of quality.
Quality is always communication-related, so to speak.
- There is an identity-related quality: what I see and find that quality is or should be, according to my principles and targets.
- There is an image-related quality: what would I like that my personality, my targets, my level should be and judged by others? Under what conditions do they "buy" my offer?
- There is an attributed quality, which means that many other endogenous factors will influence my image, the gossip around my institution, peoples behaviour (sending their children, sponsoring), the press, etcetera.

There is my quality, there is their vision on my quality, their is the story on my quality, there is my personal desired quality.

Put this into a circle with segments, and you see the reality and the necessity of a comprehensive approach of the problem. No factor is to be isolated!

Codes of ethics or Rules of Conduct are based on contemporary norms and values. The problem of all Codes is, that we never come any further than the description of some obvious, vague, non-harming and glittering generalities. Everybody has his own interpretations. Besides that, we live in a reality of extremely varying cultures and moral standards. How to catch all flies?
My own experience in this field brought me to the conclusion, that many people who would like to complain are terrified by administrative procedures.

Maybe the best modern way of detecting the dubious aspects of information and guidance is the screening of 100 brochures from 20 countries by a small committee, 10 video-programmes, 100 adds in newspapers and magazines, 50 posters. Let the members do their homework first. Not hindered by text of pre-code's, just inspired by their personal feelings in terms of "wrong-right", "acceptable-unacceptable", "leading-misleading", etcetera.
After the homework, there is a meeting and the members present their opinions. In this way you might create a "body" of norms and values. Look at the practice and derive from there a set of standards.

For moral aspects in advising, see my valedictory oration
" The Embarrassment of Advice", 1994

The Enigma group

ENIGMA stands for ENhancing the quality of Information and Guidance MAterial and standards of practice and is a transantional working group set up in early 1993 under the aegis of the PETRA II programme of the Commission of the European Communities. ENIGMA consists of the National Resource Centres of Ireland, Greece, the UK, the Netherlands, Denmark and the Flemish and German speaking communities of Belgium.

The aim of the ENIGMA-group is - as the name implies - to improve vocational and educational guidance by developing high quality guidance material and standards of practice. As a transnational group, naturally the mobility aspect ranks high on the agenda of the group: how to help students and workers move freely inside the European Union and to avail themselves of possibilities for work and study in another Member state than their own. But an equally important reason for its coming into existence has been the realisation that we - all the member states involved - are facing new challenges in the guidance field which require innovative and qualitatively different approaches. These challenges are not particular to any one member state, but are shared by all. The various member states, however, have different ways of tackling these, according to their guidance systems and traditions. By comparing approaches and pooling resources, new solutions can be found that build on the best examples from all members, and in this process of mutual inspiration, the diversity becomes a source of strenght instead of a weakness.

In the lifespan of the ENIGMA-group, 6 individual projects have been taken on board in accordance with the overall aims. These are:

1. A computer-based interactive guidance programme for the use of young people, in order to clarify their ideas concerning the possibilities - and limitations - for working and studying in another Member state than their own.

2. A handbook for young people with information on the possibilities for working and studying in naother Member state than their own

3. A database with mobility related information for groups of young people with special needs

4. A manual for guidance counsellors who wish to work with parents as a resource in the guidance process

5. SYNAPS - a state-of-the-art bulletin board system to facilitate information exchange and enhance communication between guidance counsellors in the European Union

6. A discussion group on the concept of quality in guidance, with a view to identifying joint quality norms on which to base guidance work in the future.

The work of the ENIGMA-group has since the start been coordinated by a steering committee consisting of one representative per member state involved. The individual projects have been developed jointly by the whole group, but in order to avoid confusion, two Member states have been appointed lead partners for each project.

Members of the steering group are:

Eddie Brongers (NL)
Peadar Crowley (IRL)
Effie Kondopoulos (GR)
Søren Kristensen (DK, project coordinator)
Ferdel Schröder (B/g)
Cliff Spracklen (UK)
Jozef Vanraepenbusch (B/f)

Also closely associated with the group:

Ed van de Beek
Helen Ralston
Annika Thrane Sørensen
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The ENIGMA group has been grant-aided by the Commission of the European Communities under the PETRA II programme. The ENIGMA group wishes to express its special thanks to Ms. Rita Veiga da Cunha of the Task Force For Human Resources, Education Training and Youth (now DG 22) and Mr. Xavier Farriols from the Petra Youth Bureau for their encouragement and support.

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